



# WESTERN RECORDER

January 23, 1996  
Vol. 170, No. 4

## FOR THE RECORD

**New administrator**  
President Al Mohler is considering Danny Akin to replace David Dockery as vice president for academic administration and dean of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.  
*See page 2.*

**Never too old**  
When a small church in Maceo decided to have a "Women's Day," a 72-year-old volunteered to preach.  
*See page 3.*

**Editorial**  
The Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act gives President Clinton an opportunity to show whether he's a statesman or a politician.  
*See page 5.*

**Gun-free zones**  
Texas recently passed a concealed weapons law similar to one under consideration in Kentucky, but the law declares Texas churches gun-free zones.  
*See page 7.*

**Financial Forum**  
Tips for getting out of debt.  
*See page 13.*

## Kentucky missionaries draw hazardous duty

By Melanie Childers  
Staff Writer

GLENDALE—Making their home in a killing field wasn't exactly Cathy and David Brandon's idea for overseas mission service.

But then, little of the Kentucky family's encounters in four years of ministry in Burundi offered the chance for "normal" mission service.

Mastering two new languages—French and Kirundi—and adapting to East Africa created typical hazards for first-timers on the mission field. But that was only the beginning.

Surviving a military coup, mass slaughter and evacuation during their first term created tense situations that called for tough decisions. Family members earned their veteran missionary status quickly.

The Brandons, including daughters Emily, Keely and Katie, returned to their Glendale home when they arrived in the States on furlough last June. The Kentucky natives are members of Cecilia Baptist Church.

Cathy Brandon is the daughter of Ken and Wilma Forman. Forman, Franklin Association director of missions, formerly was an associate in the Kentucky Baptist Convention's direct missions department.



David and Cathy Brandon

Seated in the living room of their quiet home in Glendale last week—within walking distance from the popular Whistle Stop Cafe—the Brandons didn't miss the contrast to their unsettling life in war-torn Burundi.

"This is still a pretty sleepy town," Mrs. Brandon said pensively of Glendale.

Not so in Burundi. The Brandons had barely completed their two years of required language training and settled into a routine when a military coup ignited an onslaught of murder and destruction by the country's two major tribes, the Hutus and the Tutsis.

The conflict, which has resulted in tens of thousands of deaths

from both camps, involves complex issues misstated by the media and misunderstood by most outsiders, Brandon said.

The couple's initial research about the tiny East African country even before they arrived there could have tipped them off about the looming difficulties, Mrs. Brandon said.

"When we looked up Burundi in the index, it said 'See massacres,'" she recalled. The country had been doused in a bloodbath in 1972, when every educated and property-owning Hutu in the country was killed by Tutsis, Brandon explained.

But both tribes have played the role of victim and offender, he added. The situation today—much like the struggles in Rwanda—represents a continuation of intense ethnic battles.

But had they known what would transpire on the political scene, the Brandons still probably would have made the same decision to move to Burundi, they said. The family had been waiting 18 months for an agricultural missions assignment. They felt God's leading, and they were ready to go.

"We were enchanted with Africa, but we mainly just wanted to go to a Third World country," Mrs. Brandon said.

□ See *Kentucky missionaries ...*, page 6

## Politicians & preachers join hands in Memphis

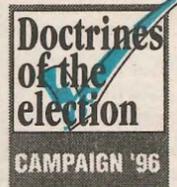
By Mark Wingfield  
Interim Editor

MEMPHIS, Tenn.—Politics, preaching and prayer flowed seamlessly together on the banks of the Mississippi River Jan. 19-20 as presidential candidates began selling themselves to the Religious Right at a National Affairs Briefing.

The briefing, organized by Baptist layman Ed McAteer, was held at the Memphis Pyramid, an imposing 32-story-high structure rising up from the banks of the Mississippi.

Ironically, conservative Christians like those gathered for the briefing had been vocal opponents of the pyramid-shaped structure before it opened in 1991, citing the pyramid as a symbol of Egyptian mysticism and modern New Age movements.

Nonetheless, several thousand participants in the National Affairs Briefing flocked into the Pyramid past a



□ See *Politicians and ...*, page 8

## Sports brings teens to church, but ministry keeps them

By Charles Willis  
SBC Sunday School Board

LAKE YALE, Fla. (BP)—Offering the opportunity to play sports can attract unchurched youth to your congregation, but offering quality programs and a continuing challenge to youth interests will keep them, a youth and sports minister told participants in Rec Lab '96.

Speaking at Lake Yale Baptist Assembly, Todd Larson said church leaders need to go beyond attracting youth to evangelizing, discipling and keeping them.

Larson is minister of youth sports and junior high youth at First Friends Church, an Evangelical Friends (Quaker) congregation in Canton, Ohio.

In both sports and youth programs, quality and challenging variety are the elements that will keep youth interested, Larson insisted, adding, "it's youth ministry that will actually keep the kids."

"We use sports to attract young people to come to our church, and the program has to be quality," Larson said. "We do everything first class, because we are looking at attracting a non-churched individual. They look at the church program through secular eyes. If we run a poor-quality

youth program, it says something about the church and it says something about Jesus Christ."

Basic factors such as starting games on time and having quality coaches and officials are important, Larson told church recreation leaders. An additional quality touch his congregation has used is putting the names of each youth on the backs of their church T-shirts, prompting the youths to wear them frequently.

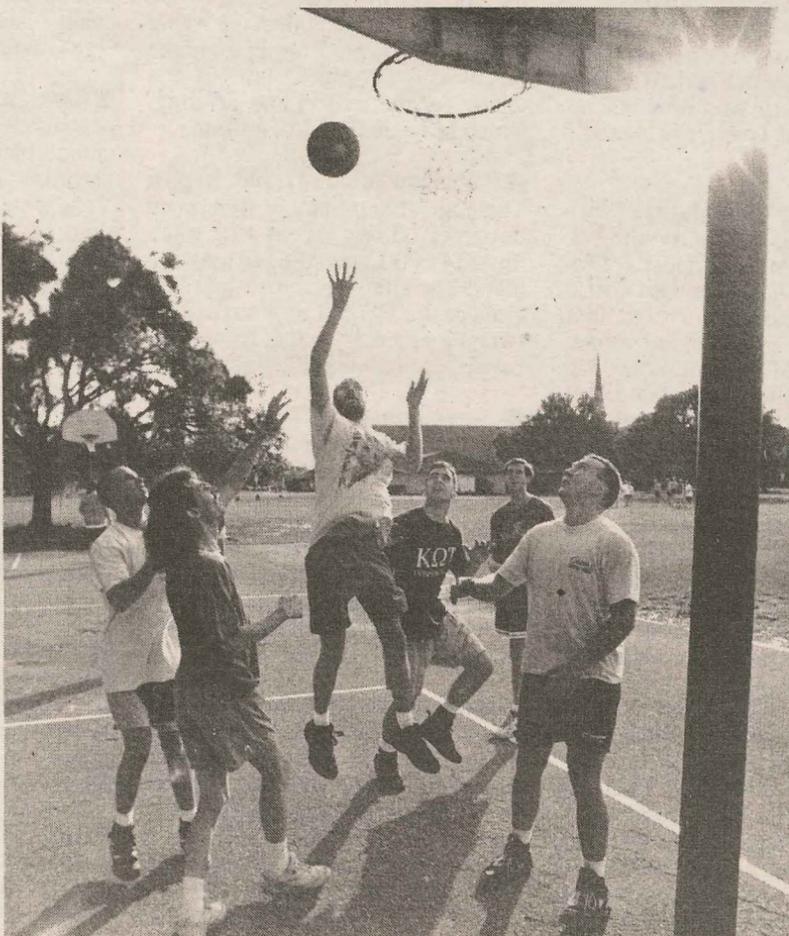
"We want this to be their favorite shirt," he explained. "We want them to wear it to school around other kids."

And as for evangelizing and discipling youth, Larson said his church provides coaches with devotional curriculum materials to use.

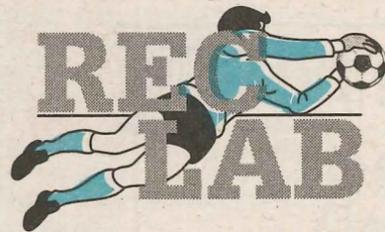
"To communicate Christian values and principles is sometimes difficult for persons whose background is in sports," he continued, "so we provide material that helps coaches tell youth who God is, what sin is, who Jesus is, how to know him personally and how to make a decision."

Another set of materials on ethics outlines how to deal with teammates, how to relate to opponents, what success is and how to reach one's fullest potential in life.

□ See *Ministry keeps teens ...*, page 10



**PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL** Thomas Fowler, recreation director for Rosemont Baptist Church in Lexington, attempts to score during a spirited game of basketball at Rec Lab '96 at Lake Yale Baptist Assembly. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)



Moving? See page 4 (0123)

# BAPTISTS

## Danny Akin under consideration to succeed Dockery

### 'Not yet' on new Texas convention

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP)—It's premature for conservative Texas Baptists to form their own state convention, but their leaders are putting a statewide network into place, according to Miles Seaborn, president of Southern Baptists of Texas.

Seaborn, pastor of Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth, spoke to about 100 people at a "fellowship" meeting at a Fort Worth hotel Jan. 16

"We need a full-blown convention right now like we need a hole in the head," Seaborn said. "What we need is a basic organization to meet our needs now and to prepare for the future." A study committee met earlier in the day, Seaborn said, to begin charting the organization's future course. Offering few specifics, he simply said the group was developing a plan for reaching people, communicating concerns, encouraging like-minded Texas Baptists and bringing more young pastors into the fold. An unnamed person, whom Seaborn called the group's "secret weapon," met with the committee to help them develop a strategy.

LOUISVILLE—Danny Akin has been identified as the likely successor to David Dockery as vice president for academic administration and dean of the theology school at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The 39-year-old dean of students at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., met with some of Southern's faculty at a Jan. 18 reception on the Louisville campus. All faculty members were invited to the reception, but turnout reportedly was low.

Dockery has been elected presi-

dent of Union University in Jackson, Tenn., a post he will assume in June.

Southern Seminary President Al Mohler informed faculty of the reception for Akin in a Jan. 16 memo. The memo described the reception as an event "designed to introduce Dr. Daniel Akin to you as a candidate for the position of vice president for academic administration and dean of the school of theology."

No official announcement about whether Akin will assume the dual roles was made after the reception, however. As of the Western Recorder's press time Jan. 21, Seminary

spokesman Michael Dudit said there was no official change in Akin's status as a candidate.

Mohler has the authority to hire anyone he chooses to fill the dual position Dockery has held. However, for that person to be granted faculty status, seminary trustees must give their approval.

Akin has been vice president of student services, dean of students and assistant professor of Christian theology at Southeastern since 1992. He was professor of New Testament, theology and history at Criswell College in Dallas from 1986-1992.

Akin previously was on the staff of First Baptist Church of Dallas, was associate pastor of Audelia Road Baptist Church in Dallas and assistant pastor of Northlake Baptist Church in Dallas from 1978-84.

He is a 1980 graduate of Criswell College and earned the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1983. He holds a doctorate from the University of Texas at Arlington.

Based on a Baptist Press report with additional reporting by Western Recorder staff

## WMU assumes more financial responsibility

TALLADEGA, Ala. (BP)—Woman's Missionary Union will assume financial responsibility for its work with language groups, relinquishing approximately \$195,000 in revenue from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

WMU's executive board, meeting Jan. 13-17 at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly in Talladega, Ala., approved the recommendation from its finance committee that WMU fulfill a 1993 agreement with the HMB which called for WMU to reduce the funding it received from the HMB by the year 2000.

In 1993, WMU received about \$378,000 from the HMB for its work among ethnic and African-American congregations. WMU has reduced that amount annually since.

In other business, the board:

- Approved the creation of a consultation committee, which will serve in an advisory role to the WMU executive director and WMU national president on matters affecting WMU as a whole. Kentucky WMU President Peggy Hicks will serve on this committee.

- Approved violence as WMU's national social issue for 1998-99.

As is customary, some sessions of the WMU executive board meeting were held behind closed doors, and details of those sessions were not disclosed.

## Last year's Annie Armstrong Offering tops \$38 million

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)—Southern Baptists gave \$38.9 million for home missions through the 1995 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, according to Ernest Kelly, the Home Mission Board's chief financial officer.

The year-end total represents a 4.66 percent increase over the previous year's offering of \$37.18 million. However, it falls short of the ambitious \$50 million goal set for the 1995 offering.

"I'm delighted that we have again this year set an all-time record in Annie Armstrong income," said HMB President Larry Lewis. "And I would express on behalf of all our staff and nearly 5,000 home missions personnel our deep appreciation to Southern Baptists for their strong support for home missions."

Woman's Missionary Union President Dellanna O'Brien also praised Southern Baptists for the increase.

"Because we Southern Baptists

have been faithful in our missions giving in 1995 through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, men, women, boys and girls in our homeland will have the opportunity to hear the gospel in fresh new ways," she said.

"I am grateful to be a part of a denomination that keeps its mission vision clearly before us," she added. "Nearly \$39 million is a worthy offering, but not one cent more than our missionaries need to support their programs."

### BAPTIST BITS

- **Truett names Creed.** Brad Creed, associate dean of Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary since 1993, was elected dean of the seminary in Waco, Texas, Jan. 19. Creed succeeds Robert Sloan, the first Truett Seminary dean, who was elected president of Baylor last year. In the interim, Russell Dilday, former president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary who now teaches preaching at Truett, has been acting dean.

- **Nobles pleads guilty.** Lewis Nobles, accused of stealing \$3 million from the Baptist college where he was president for 25 years, pleaded guilty to mail fraud, tax evasion and money laundering in federal court Jan. 17. Sentencing is scheduled April 15. Nobles, 70, could receive up to 40 years in prison and fines of \$1.5 million for the crimes, but prosecutors are not seeking a maximum sentence because Nobles lacks a prior record and cooperated with authorities. Nobles resigned in 1993 as president of Mississippi College, a Baptist school with 2,400 students in Clinton, Miss.

- **Mercer to break ground.** Mercer University will break ground for a new School of Theology building Feb. 6, university officials announced. The building, expected to be completed by next January at a \$3 million price tag, will house both the theology

school, which is scheduled to begin classes this fall, and offices of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which will lease space from Mercer.

- **Season of missions begins.** The annual Season of Home Missions begins next month, as Southern Baptists focus on the work of their Home Mission Board and collect the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions. "People Count" is the theme for the season and offering, which has a goal of \$42 million.

- **Richmond gets \$147,000.** Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond has received two recent gifts totaling \$147,000, according to the seminary. The gifts are from retired Virginia pastor Henry Langford and his wife, Florence, as well as from a disbanded church near Pittsburgh, Pa.

- **Development officer resigns.** Paul Fruits, development director at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has resigned that post to begin his own consulting firm. Fruits had been the only full-time development officer remaining on the seminary staff. Tom Mabe, vice president for institutional advancement, resigned in the fall.

- **Reighard elected.** Georgia pastor Dwight "Ike" Reighard was elected senior associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta Jan. 14, confirming earlier reports that he would assume the position alongside the church's senior pastor, Charles Stanley. Reighard, 45, will serve as pastor to First Baptist's satellite congregations and will assist Stanley at the church's main location.

- **Wheaton prof to Southern.** Timothy Beougher has been named associate professor of evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Beougher has been assistant professor of evangelism at the Wheaton College Graduate School since 1990.

- **Cashion to lead human needs.** Missionary Bill Cashion, a church planter known for his innovative baseball ministry in Venezuela, has been named director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's human needs program.

- **Brotherhood taps Wells.** Herschel Wells, a 24-year veteran of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, has been named associate director of the agency's adults in missions department. He will focus on matching requests for volunteers with contacts in state convention Brotherhood departments, local churches and volunteer fellowships.

- **Mercer names Johnson.** Ron Johnson, evangelism director for the Georgia Baptist Convention, has been named associate professor of evangelism at the new Mercer University School of Theology. Johnson, 46, previously taught at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and served on staff at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

NO DANCING



Rev. Rollo's convictions were anything but ambiguous

## 72-year-old brings message on church's Women's Day

By Melanie Childers  
Staff Writer

MACEO—When Dawson Memorial Baptist Church near Owensboro decided to hold its first-ever Baptist Women's Day last November, 72-year-old Betty Duncan volunteered to "do the preaching."

"I'd never done anything like that before," admitted Duncan, a longtime member and Sunday school teacher. "I'd prayed in public, but that's about it."

Yet when plans for Women's Day were announced, Duncan didn't hesitate to volunteer.

"I just felt led to do it," she said. In fact, Duncan said she couldn't remember even one woman in the predominantly older congregation who turned down an invitation to participate in the event.

In addition to Duncan, women directed the music, played the piano, took up the offering, shared testimonies, made announcements and offered special music.

The women-led service accomplished several purposes, explained Brenda Boyd, who coordinated the

event along with her husband, Stephen, the church's pastor.

"I provided leadership development, and an opportunity for them to serve God in a different way than they normally do," she said. "And it promoted the role of women in the church."

Duncan's sermon, taken from the book of James, focused on the importance of prayer and of being people of faith.

"I tried to impress on people how important it was to depend on God for their everyday life," she said.

The congregation—mostly older people from the rural area surrounding the church, which sits in a corn field—could identify with "everyday life" full of hardships and challenges.

Duncan herself has suffered from a variety of health problems, and just the year before had been critically ill.

"If the Lord hadn't taken care of me, I wouldn't be here. So I thought he must have something else for me to do," she said.

"I kindly wrote out my message, then left part of it at home that day," she recalled. "But it all worked out. The Lord gave me the words to say."

Duncan admitted being a little nervous before she delivered her message. "But I overcame it, with the Lord's help," she said.

Boyd said she had wanted to organize a Women's Day for years—even before she and her husband came to Dawson Memorial.

"We always have a youth day and a men's day; why not have a women's day?" Boyd asked.

And at Dawson Memorial, where only four of the 25-30 faithful worshippers are men, a women's day seemed to make sense.

Stephen Boyd, a teacher and a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, became bivocational pastor of Dawson Memorial Baptist two years ago.

Since coming to the church, the Boyds looked for ways to strengthen the congregation, Brenda Boyd said, noting Women's Day did just that.

"It really boosted their spirits," she said.

Boyd said most women approached about participating were "willing to try, but less than confident of their ability" to lead in worship.

Boyd believes the event helped

women recognize and exercise their potential.

"I think they'll realize they can do more than make Kool-aid for vacation Bible school," she said.

And although the worship may not have seemed quite as polished as usual, the women discovered they still could be a blessing to people.

"They learned it doesn't have to be star quality to be effective," Boyd said.

And as for the men, "they loved it. They were totally supportive—just very proud of the women," Boyd said.

Duncan's husband of 56 years, John, was so proud of his wife that he made copies of her sermon and sent them to their two sons, who lived too far away to attend the service, Duncan said.

The 20 family members and friends who attended the service specifically to hear Duncan helped double the church's average attendance that day.

Boyd believes the day had a lasting impact on the congregation.

"We plan to make (Women's Day) at least a yearly event," Brenda Boyd noted.

### BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Billy Brannock** has been named a special assistant in the development office at Georgetown College. Brannock, a retired insurance banker and longtime Georgetown volunteer, will help develop new sources of revenue for the college.

■ **Georgetown College** invites high school juniors and seniors and their parents to a special day for prospective students Feb. 10. For information and a schedule of activities, call (800) 788-9985.

■ **Two retired pastors** have been named special representatives with Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. The two are John Kruschwitz, former pastor of Highland Hills Baptist Church in Fort Thomas and Versailles Baptist Church in Versailles, and Curtis Warf, former pastor of First Baptist Church of Pikeville and First Baptist Church of Richmond. Both are past presidents of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

■ **Rodney Burnette** and **Sidney Fogle**, pastor and deacon chairman at Ninth & O Baptist Church in Louisville, traveled to Bosnia last week to help distribute shoe boxes filled with gifts for children. The gift boxes were created by members of Ninth & O as well as other churches across the state who read about the project in the Western Recorder. The church shipped two trailers of gift boxes, medical supplies and food.

## Kentucky team met special needs of hurting women in St. Maarten

By Joyce Sweeney Martin  
Staff Writer

BURLINGTON—If Alice Ryles had known she was going to be the only woman on a disaster relief team headed to St. Maarten last November, she might not have gone.

But now that the trip is history, she's glad she did.

Ryles, a member of Burlington Baptist Church in Northern Kentucky, and three other Kentucky volunteers were a part of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's relief efforts after Hurricanes Lois and Marilyn. Hurricane Lois hit the small Caribbean island Sept. 6. About a week later, more than 11 inches of rain fell as a result of Hurricane Marilyn.

Ryles, Terry Shinkler of Burlington Baptist Church, Bill Arnold of Farmdale Baptist Church in Louisville and Joseph Riordan of St. Chris-

topher Catholic Church in Louisville, spent two weeks on the Dutch side of the island rebuilding three homes destroyed by the hurricanes. Seven other team members came from Tennessee, Maryland and North Carolina.

While it is highly unusual for a woman to go on the Brotherhood Commission's overseas disaster relief missions, the team soon discovered that Ryles' background and skills uniquely suited her for the situation. Questions from both the volunteer team and the native islanders about why she had come quickly gave way to respect, according to Arnold.

"She more than showed she could handle the situation with the men," Shinkler said. "She could do the same things they did."

The 53-year-old widow had spent all her life on a farm. Before her husband's death six years ago,

she had worked with him on several renovation projects, including their home.

"I'm not afraid of physical work," the soft-spoken mother of three said.

Thus, working alongside the men sawing ridge boards, cutting 2 x 6 rafters to fit, nailing on hurricane clips and then completing the roofs with plywood and metal roofing was not new to her. Two of the three homes they rebuilt still had walls standing when they arrived, but the third was a "mere flat slab of concrete and floor tile," according to Arnold.

Ryles also did something the men could not do. She bonded with the women who had lost their homes, Shinkler said. As a single mother with two teenagers back home, Ryles could "relate to the women better than the men could."

For example, a woman named

Daisy especially responded to Ryles' care, Shinkler recalled. Daisy not only had lost her home, but her husband had lost his job because the resort where he worked was destroyed. He did not expect to return to work for three years. And, a few days before the team arrived, Daisy had given birth to the couple's fourth child.

"She was so depressed, but Alice lifted her spirits," Arnold said.

Another woman, Shirley, also shared with Ryles that "only with God's help can we endure."

"I could relate to them, to the mothers unable to keep their households together," Ryles said.

And on the nights when she wondered why she was there, it was the knowledge that "God put me there for the women of the island" that kept Ryles focused, she said. "God was saying to me, 'Look what it has meant to Shirley and Daisy.'"

## Three Kentuckians contribute to new youth training packet

By Joyce Sweeney Martin  
Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—Three Kentuckians have collaborated to write a volume of life-centered Bible studies especially geared to help youth understand their faith.

Kentuckians Jeff Hicks, Phil Bradley and Mike Harmon, along with New Englander Laura Lea Chamblee, wrote the 10 lessons for volume 15 of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's StraighTrak series. StraighTrak, which is produced quarterly, features teen Bible studies on current issues.

StraighTrak began in 1992 in response to a grassroots appeal for easy-to-use, timely youth Bible study ma-

terials for Wednesday night Bible studies, retreats and short-term events, according to Hicks, who works in the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Sunday school department.

Each volume/packet contains lesson plans, overhead cells, promotional items and handouts. And each of the 10 lessons is self-standing, thus allowing youth workers to pick and choose, Hicks said.

But the most appreciated feature of StraighTrak may be the timely fashion in which the materials are produced, according to Louis Hanks of the Sunday School Board. From conceptualization to deliver on church doorsteps takes less than six months, he said. Thus, topics can be current and relevant.

While the volume the Kentuckians worked on follows the standard StraighTrak design, it also incorporates some new features, according to Hicks.

For the first time, all the lessons were integrated so that youth could move in a progression should they choose to complete all 10 lessons. "We wanted youth to take a holistic approach to life," Hicks said. By the end, "we wanted them to have developed a personal code that they could live by during the difficult teen years."

"Pulling it all together" is how Harmon, minister of education and youth and First Baptist Church in Princeton, described the approach the team took. He believes people can at-

tend Sunday school for years and still only have a "fragmented" knowledge of God and the Bible.

Using the session called "Personal Faith" which Harmon wrote, youth can "write their personal theology" and be "systematic" in their understanding of God and what God wants of them, he said.

And then using the session "Life Management" which Bradley wrote, youth can develop a standard for relating to one another, he said. Relationships are a hot topic among youth, according to Bradley, who is associate pastor at Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro.

Additionally, volume 15 features drama and skit ideas, something new to StraighTrak, Hicks said.

## WESTERN RECORDER

P.O. Box 43969  
Louisville, Ky. 40253  
(ISSN 0043-4132)

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*Earnestly contend for the  
faith which was once for  
all delivered to the  
saints.—Jude 3*

Western Recorder is published weekly by Western Recorder Inc., an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253, except for one week in July and December. For general information, call (502) 244-6470. Fax: (502) 244-6474. Send e-mail to CompuServe 102667,1300. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

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## BAPTIST FORUM

In reading about the plight of Charles and Sharon Carroll in their Singapore church, I was troubled by the statement that no course of opposition to this action will arise. How correct you are.

Far too many people in our churches still want to maintain the comfortable, traditional approach to worship. Many who might want to speak out fear ostracism or in the case of staff members, firing. Maybe we need to restudy Mark 9:38-40.

With the fast-developing legalism approach of us Southern Baptists, will we win the 31.5 percent of the world that has not heard about Christ or become a mere spectator in these final days of world evangelism?

The Foreign Mission Board now has a new connotation on Blackaby's "Find out where God is working and join Him." Four hundred members, 63 missions, sounds like God at work to me. They cannot join them.

However, it is so comforting to know Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has discovered Ephesians 6 and will now inform their future missionaries about spiritual warfare.

So we can take pride that the Foreign Mission Board does have the authority to fire missionaries when they depart from tradition and will exercise this authority. Pun intended.

Ronald Ward  
Glasgow

**■ What do you think?** The Western Recorder welcomes reader response to news and opinion pieces. Send your signed letter to the editor, 250 words or less, to Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253. Fax us at (502) 244-6472. E-mail us on CompuServe at 102667,1300.

## How long, O Lord?

The news that Jordan and Israel have agreed to peaceful relations and specific actions for future cooperation was, for me, an exhilarating experience. The welcome the Israelis have just given King Hussein in Tel Aviv is, indeed, a miracle. Our years in the Middle East were years of hostility between these two nations.

Further, it renews my tired hope that our own broken relationships can be mended; that perhaps Southern Baptists might yet find our way to some kind of a "reasonable togetherness," admitting that things can never be quite the same.

As the Middle East news began breaking, I returned to a significant book I had read in 1990, "From Beirut to Jerusalem" by Thomas L. Friedman, which penetratingly describes the morass of the Middle East. To introduce his work, Friedman borrows a passage from Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn:"

## When praying in public, remember you're speaking for the congregation

There seems to be a distracting trend among some who lead in public prayer today. Although sincere and well-intentioned, those who pray in that manner do not seem to be aware there are two kinds of prayer.

There is what we call public or congregational prayer; there also is private prayer. Jesus used both.

But he taught there is a distinct difference in the way we address God in our private and public prayers.

This distracting trend of some is to lead in public prayer, but to use the personal pronoun of "I" instead of "we" and "my" instead of "our." They sometimes begin, "Lord, I pray today that..." They sometimes conclude the congregational prayer with, "I pray this prayer is Christ's name," or "hear my prayer in Jesus' name."

When a person is leading a congregation in prayer, it is implied that all the people are praying that prayer with the leader. Jesus taught the disciples to pray, using "our" and "us" to voice a prayer in which all are participating.

Sometimes when a person is leading in a moving, profound prayer to God and interjects "this is my prayer, Heavenly Father," I want to cry out and say, "Hey, mine too, Lord!" I feel left out.

The leader in public prayer is not only voicing his or her thoughts, but is also helping others

speak to the Father.

In the congregation there may be some who do not know how to pray, who may be hesitant even to approach God, but in that congregational prayer they are helped to pray. By including them in the "our" and the "us" and the "we" of that prayer, they can feel a part of what is being said to Almighty God.

Jesus also recognized the personal, private approach to God and so used the "I" and "my" in his prayers. John 17 is one example of that. When he was alone in Gethsemane he prayed, "O, my Father." Joseph Parker commented on that Gethsemane passage: "We pray a certain kind of prayer in the great congregation, a necessary expression of common praises and wants. But there is another kind of prayer which none but God may hear."

There are different kinds of prayer depending on the place and the purpose of the moment. There is a place for the "I" and the "my" in prayer.

But when we lead others to pray, we must remember the responsibility of also helping them address God. Then together we pray, "Our Father, forgive our sins, give us daily bread and lead us, we pray, into your eternal presence, for Jesus' sake."

John Wallace  
Lexington

## MINISTERIALLY SPEAKING

"Did you want to kill him, Buck?"

"Well, you bet I did."

"What did he do to you?"

"Him? He never done nothing to me."

"Well, then, what did you want to kill him for?"

"Why, nothing—only it's on account of the feud."

"What's a feud?"

"Why, where was you raised? Don't you know what a feud is?"

"Never heard of it before—tell me about it."

"Well," says Buck, "a feud is this way: A man has a quarrel with another man, and kills him; then that other man's brother kills him; then the other brothers, on both sides, goes for one another; then the cousins chip in—and by and by everybody's killed off, and there ain't no more feud. But it's kind of slow, and takes a long time."

"Has this one been going on long, Buck?"

"Well, I should reckon! It started 30 years ago, or som'ers along

there. There was trouble 'bout something, and then a lawsuit to settle it; and the suit went agin one of the men, and so he up and shot the man that won the suit—which he would naturally do, of course. Anybody would."

"What was the trouble about, Buck?—land?"

"I reckon maybe—I don't know."

"Well, who done the shooting? Was it a Grangerford or a Shepherdson?"

"Laws, how do I know? It was so long ago."

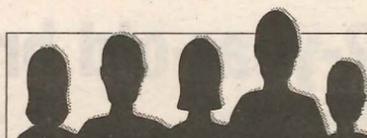
"Don't anybody know?"

"Oh, yes, Pa knows, I reckon, and some of the old people; but they don't know now what the row was about in the first place."

The time will likely come when our present struggles with each other will fill little more than a page or two in a future history of Southern Baptists.

For now, however, this "Baptist feud" still runs its course and we all suffer from it.

William W. Marshall is executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.



## FAMILY FORUM

### Warning: Balloons can be hazardous

By Jewell Nelson

When I was a child, the 5-year-old brother of a friend of mine choked to death on a piece of a broken rubber balloon. From that time on, I have been well aware of the dangers of balloons.

Adults need to know of the risks that may be involved when children are allowed to play with balloons.

Recently the Journal of the American Medical Association stated that balloons "kill more children than any other toy except for bicycles and other riding toys."

The Journal states that balloons were the cause of 131 choking deaths nationwide between 1972 and 1992—29 percent of all such childhood fatalities reported to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

There have been no warnings on balloons, but that is to change soon. A federal law recently required manufacturers to include labels warning that balloons can be choking hazards.

Even though warning labels may be on balloons, too many adults may not take the warnings seriously.

Caution is especially needed when a balloon bursts. Some children like to chew on broken pieces of rubber balloons. A small piece of a balloon may go into a child's mouth, and into the throat, causing asphyxiation.

A child may try to make a small balloon by placing a piece of a rubber balloon over his mouth and sucking in to catch air, and then quickly twisting the broken edges to close the air bubble. This is when a balloon piece may go into the windpipe and asphyxiate the child.

String attached to a balloon can become wrapped around a very young child's neck and cause choking.

Allow children to enjoy colorful, festive balloons with the following cautions in mind:

■ Destroy, and remind children to destroy, broken pieces of balloons. Balloon pieces also can choke birds.

■ Do not allow a young child to handle a deflated balloon.

■ Tie inflated balloons so they may be enjoyed from a distance.

■ If a child is allowed to handle a balloon, be sure a responsible person is ever present.

Jewell Nelson is associate director of the KBC's Sunday school department.

## HE SAID/SHE SAID

### The best-laid plans for potty-training often end up all wet

#### HESAIID



Mark Wingfield

When Shakespeare wrote the phrase, "These are the times that try men's souls," surely he had been around someone trying to potty train a child.

Our twin boys are 3 years and seven months old now, and their mother has declared war on the diapers. They will be potty-trained by Christmas, she declared sometime around Halloween.

As of this writing, the Christmas tree has come and gone and we are not flush with success.

I, of course, am the unwitting accomplice in this potty-training caper. I'm not the one at home with them all day. And besides, the diaper bills have dropped off considerably now that the boys are perfectly content to walk around for hours in soaking-wet diapers, apparently unfazed by the subtle pressure we thought would send them running to the potty.

Nonetheless, I have seen my share of combat duty. And I share my part of the seemed-like-a-good-idea-at-the-time failures we hope won't make the boys break out in a cold sweat later in life every time they pass a bathroom.

We heard from some friends about a child who would do No. 1 in the potty but refused to do No. 2 there. One day, they caught him at the beginning stages of soiling his diaper, quickly tore his diaper off and sat him on the toilet, just in time for the deed to be done. Once he saw how simple it was, he did it on his own forevermore.

Well, it doesn't always work so easily. I found a similar golden opportunity with Luke recently, grabbed him and rushed to the bathroom, accidentally brushing his head against the door frame in my haste. The whole experience scared the child so badly that he became constipated for better than a day.

At least I think I have a good illustration if ever called upon to preach a sermon on the verse from 1 John, which talks about the person who "shuteth up his bowels of compassion."

#### SHESAIID



Alison Wingfield

I really didn't want to write about this and still don't. Potty-training may seem like a funny topic to those parents who have passed that stage and entered it into the baby book along with first walk and first words, but to those who are in the throes of it, this is no laughing matter.

Why is it that when your children fail to accomplish one of those major milestones which everybody else's children seem to have completed, the

parent is the one who feels like a failure? I have never been so frustrated in my life.

Mark's share of "combat duty" is more like a few mild skirmishes compared to what I've been through. Whether male or female, whoever stays at home taking care of the kids all day knows what I'm talking about.

I've read the books, I've followed the "don't push them" rules, and then I've broken all the rules with candy bribes. I've used the "real" training pants. It's still just hit and miss (excuse the pun).

About the only success I really can claim so far is that "Once Upon a Potty" is one of the boys' favorite books. It's like faith without works.

Of course, when you get right down to it, I think it's a boy thing. Girls almost always potty-train earlier than boys. At least I have that to fall back on when people ask me about it.

So now I'm gearing up for round 564.

We'll let you know how it turns out.

Mark Wingfield is interim editor of the Western Recorder.  
Alison Wingfield is a freelance writer.

## Will the extremists win Clinton's veto?

President Clinton soon will have an opportunity to prove whether he's a statesman or a politician.

Both houses of Congress have passed a piece of abortion legislation that is by no means extreme and, in fact, could be called reasonable. In this political war zone, it's rare to find the words "abortion" and "reasonable" used in the same sentence.

Once some minor differences in the House and Senate versions of the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act are worked out, the bill should be sent to the president's desk. Unfortunately, his spokesmen have said he's likely to veto it.

If this bill gets vetoed, it will be because the president has given in to the most extreme wing of the pro-abortion lobby. Contrary to the alarm they are sounding, this bill would not signal the death-knell to a woman's right to control her own body.

It would create a small but reasonable restriction: One controversial, seldom-used, late-term abortion procedure known as dilation and extraction would be banned.

The problem is that the most extreme pro-abortion crowd resists any restriction at all. They view abortion as an absolute right which should be available to any woman at any time for any reason and using any

method.

They are fighting to convince the president that ensuring a woman's right to even the most gruesome form of late-term abortion is essential to the nation's well-being and must not be restricted.

But how is the nation's best interest served by allowing a procedure in which a fully developed child is partially delivered, then stabbed in the head with scissors so its brains can be sucked out? That's exactly how dilation and extraction works.

Many Christians of genuine faith disagree on exactly when life begins and on the morality of first-trimester abortions, especially in cases of rape, incest and saving the life of the mother. But that debate and the debate over late-term dilation and extraction abortions are worlds apart.

Just as the right to free speech does not allow a person to scream "Fire!" in a crowded theater, so the right to control one's own body should not allow the violent destruction of another fully developed life.

This is one issue worth making your voice heard on. Call or write the White House to tell President Clinton what you think. Urge him to be a moral statesman, not a politician.

— Mark Wingfield

#### EDITORIAL

## A new climate of soul-searching on abortion

Each year, the end of January marks a sober anniversary: the Supreme Court decision known as Roe vs. Wade.

But the year just past included some good news for the anti-abortion movement:

- The religious conversion of Norma McCorvey, the "Roe" of the decision's title, and her defection to the anti-abortion cause.

- Congress' approval of a law forbidding a particularly gruesome form of late-term abortion.

- A lengthy cover story in the Atlantic Monthly, presenting a strategy for rolling back abortion's high numbers, which remain at about 1.5 million per year.

- The growing willingness of abortion moderates in the Republican Party to part company with the abortion-as-liberation crowd, decrying the damage the procedure does to our social fabric.

Ironically, this last hopeful bud is sprouting from debates about whether the party platform should include a call for a human life amendment. It seems that when the issue of abortion legality is separated from that of abortion desirability, a whole new flock of anti-abortion partisans bursts forth.

There is little likelihood abortion will become illegal in the near future. Even the law mentioned above must overcome a presidential veto and, if enforced, would permit equally deadly methods to be substituted. Abortion businesses will continue to open in our shopping centers and advertise in our Yellow Pages.

But the very security of abortion's legal status is allowing room for soul-searching and second thoughts that would have seemed too risky before. Suppressed voices are speaking out: women who had abortions—and who may still be pro-choice—but who found in the aftermath of loss a

searching, unexpected grief. Before, it would have been traitorous to say this. Now, hearts are breaking open and spilling out their pain.

Many of these women, of course, become anti-abortion; the National Women's Coalition for Life includes a quarter-million post-abortion women in their cause.

But some try to work out a middle path.

One example is Naomi Wolf, who wrote an essay in a recent issue of The New Republic. She began with examples of women's regret over the violence of abortion and called on fellow abortion-rights advocates to acknowledge that abortion kills.

How then can abortion be permitted? Because it can be handled in the context of "sin and repentance." Wolf suggested that we recognize abortion as a "terrible social evil" but one permissible if chosen after careful deliberation, with plans to atone ("mending").

This is a good try, but it ultimately stumbles, hobbled by moral illogic. To borrow from C.S. Lewis, a long face is not a moral disinfectant. The man who beats his wife regretfully, deliberately, may be a more pleasant fellow than the one who does it in a drunken rage, but the difference to the wife is slight.

In fact, there's something funny about using the fact that we realize something is wrong as a permission slip to do it. Feeling bad about something doesn't make it the right thing to do. Maybe feeling bad is a tipoff that it's the wrong thing to do.

Wolf, I'm afraid, radically underestimates the capacity of the human heart to rationalize, to wheedle with the voice of conscience until it gives up in confusion.

Applying her moral strategy to adultery highlights the problem: This

fling feels necessary to my life for innumerable reasons, I promise I'll feel bad about it afterwards, and I'll make it up to my spouse and kids ("mending") in many ways.

Sorry, it doesn't wash. Second, I believe Wolf underestimates the punch this remorse can pack. When I was writing my book, "Real Choices," I interviewed women across the country about the difficulties that caused them to choose abortion. I found, however, that they could not resist pouring out the far-worse pain that came after the abortion.

Sometimes these women had reacted first with frantic abortion-rights activism, but gradually a horrifying realization grew until it became a millstone burden: "I killed my baby." Few realizations could be worse.

Some of these women found the grief erupting in drug abuse, promiscuity, divorce, depression, eating disorders, self-loathing and suicidal thoughts.

Pro-life pregnancy support centers find the demand for post-abortion grief counseling growing at a high rate, including the recent development of groups for men.

Something like critical mass is being reached here. We can no longer pretend that abortion empowers women, or that it's a reasonable, regretful choice.

When women are doing something they don't want to do, something that makes them miserable, 4,000 times a day, it's not liberation that we've won. Abortion is just the bizarre new form of an old, old oppression: changing women's bodies at the cost of their tears, instead of changing society.

Last year, "Jane Roe" herself came to admit that truth. May she be the first of many. (RNS)

Frederica Mathewes-Green  
Author of the new book "Real Choices"

## Kentucky missionaries find life hazardous in Burundi

**"We could see paratroopers dropping behind our house ... and roving bands with machetes ... in the streets."**

*Cathy Brandon, describing her family's experience in Burundi*

*Continued from page 1*

"Once you've been to a Third World country and see how they struggle to survive," people glean a new perspective on what it means to struggle, Brandon explained.

"There's something very wrong. Americans are working so hard to stay up here at this level," he said, holding an arm out in front of his shoulders. But residents of Burundi are "struggling just to survive" on the basics of life, he added, dropping his arm to a lower height.

Brandon, an agriculturist by trade, was appointed to coordinate community development and church starting in the city of Gitega, where no Baptist work had been done before.

But because of the political turmoil, community development turned into relief aid distribution, he explained.

"How can you even talk to them about improving their (crop) yields" if Burundians are just trying to survive to the next day without getting shot?" he asked.

Mrs. Brandon's primary role was

home schooling the children, she said, adding that her dreams of building community with Burundian women by setting up sewing and quilting classes never were realized.

"Even in the best of times, that would have been difficult," she acknowledged. In a crisis situation, it was impossible.

After the coup in October 1993, the Brandons were left without water, electricity or telephone.

"We could see paratroopers dropping behind our house ... and roving bands with machetes ... in the streets," Mrs. Brandon said.

Fighting became so severe late in 1993 that the Kentuckians evacuated to Kenya for two months.

Brandon made two trips back to Burundi to try to assess what kind of relief aid would be needed. He described the situation as "total bedlam and panic."

In January 1994, the family returned home to begin whatever assistance they could offer.

The couple spoke of frustration and small rewards, not of any grand accomplishment. Many days were

spent addressing the needs of people lined up outside their door asking for help. Brandon spent a year distributing relief aid in the area.

Kentucky Baptists need to know that the only way Brandon was able to assist Burundis was through Southern Baptist world hunger funds, Mrs. Brandon said. Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon gifts do not provide money for relief efforts.

Mrs. Brandon stressed that Southern Baptists' world hunger fund differs from other good organizations because 100 percent of the money is used for relief.

Living through the harrowing experience has both tested and strengthened the Brandons' faith, they said.

"It's made me more aware that our security is only in the Lord," Mrs. Brandon noted.

"This kind of situation demands so much more honesty with God," Mrs. Brandon added. "I grew up basically a good kid, and tried to always do what was right. And now I was in a place where the bad guy always

won.

"It's easy to get real angry and judgmental, until you realize—you can evacuate," he continued. "Then I realized if I were in their place, I would be ready to kill too."

"That changed my relationship to God, when I realized I'm not 'good,'" he said. "But for the grace of God, I'd be killing people too."

Brandon acknowledged he is pessimistic about being able to return to Burundi. They have not heard about the security of their home and belongings since last September. No other Southern Baptist missionaries remain in the country.

Obtaining visas presents the greatest challenge for the family's return. Safety is not the issue, the couple insisted, saying there's no safe place outside of God's will.

If visas are denied, the couple will consider other options, including transferring to a nearby African country.

"The bottom line is, we're committed to living in another country to serve," Mrs. Brandon said. "We just hope it's Burundi."

### Louis: A bird with four languages

**By Melanie Childers**  
*Staff Writer*

GLENDAL—The Brandon family's pet parrot is no bird-brain.

With four languages under his beak, "Louis" has earned a place of respect and often, center stage in the household of missionaries Cathy and David Brandon.

The bird's crazy antics and entertaining noises also have provided comic relief to a family that has endured tremendous turmoil trying to minister in Burundi during a time of serious political unrest.

Louis, a Congo African Gray parrot native to Zaire, has been part of the Brandon family for about four years.

Louis made the long trek to the States last year when the Brandons returned to Kentucky on furlough.

Content on his perch by the fireplace in the living room as long as people are around, Louis listens to conversation, occasionally adding

his two cents' worth.

"We're big animal-lovers," Mrs. Brandon said, naming a long list of cats, dogs, guinea pigs and dikers—small antelope-like creatures—which have at various times been part of their household.

But Louis seems to get top billing.

"These birds typically bond to one person, and that's Cathy," Brandon said, explaining how Louis enjoys sitting on Mrs. Brandon's shoulder. But Louis chose Brandon's voice to mimic.

A highly intelligent bird, Louis laughs, whistles the theme from "Andy Griffith" and mimics a variety of sounds including drills and the telephone's ring.

"The worst is the smoke alarm," Brandon said, noting Louis picked that sound up when the alarms were being installed.

By far, Louis' linguistic skills mark his greatest accomplishment. The bird speaks parts of four lan-



Louis

guages—English, French, Kirundi and Swahili.

And often, he knows which language to use—greeting Burundians in the Kirundi language, and addressing people with light skin in English or French.

If he's in a good humor, he may even carry on a conversation with folks, the Brandons explained. He asks how the visitor is faring and re-

sponds in kind when asked about himself.

Louis also developed a positive relationship with other animals in the household—Kentucky the cat and Dusty the dog.

"Whenever Dusty comes into the room, Louis will say 'Hey, Dusty dog,'" Mrs. Brandon explained.

"Sometimes I would call Dusty 'you old hound dog,' because he looks like a hound dog," she added. But this posed a little problem later when someone from the Foreign Mission Board came to visit and Louis called out to him, "Hey, you old hound dog."

A few embarrassing moments notwithstanding, Louis has proved himself more than an entertaining pet, the Brandons said. He became a talking conversation piece that helped Burundians feel welcome in the Brandons' home.

"He's opened so many doors for people to come and talk to us, it's amazing," Brandon said.

### WORLD VIEW

■ **Nuns murdered.** Two North American Catholic nuns were found hacked to death on a Ghana beach Jan. 9. Two Ghanaians have been arrested.

■ **Church confirms hell.** The doctrine commission of the Church of England has declared hell is a real place, although it said popular conceptions of final damnation are off the mark. In a report issued Jan. 11, the commission said: "Hell is not eternal torment, but it is the final and irrevocable choosing of that which opposed to God so completely

and so absolutely that the only end is total non-being. Annihilation might be a truer picture of damnation than any of the traditional images of hell and eternal torment."

■ **Royal divorce no problem.** A divorced king would cause the Church of England no problems, but a divorced and remarried king would cause it some embarrassment, according to experts on Anglican church law. Queen Elizabeth II has urged "an early divorce" for Prince Charles and his estranged wife, Princess

Diana. The Church of England refuses to conduct church weddings for divorced individuals as a matter of church discipline. A further cause of embarrassment would arise if Prince Charles succeeds his mother to become king of England, at which time he also would become governor of the Church of England.

■ **Orthodox membership up.** The global Orthodox population is growing because of a Christian revival in former communist countries. World

membership in Orthodox churches is estimated at between 200 million and 250 million, reported Ecumenical News International, the news service of the World Council of Churches. The largest Orthodox populations are in Russia, Romania and Greece.

■ **Graham's son to speak.** Billy Graham's son Franklin will take his father's place at crusades in Australia in March. The elder Graham has been recovering from a bathtub fall, in which he broke four ribs.

## Texas law makes church gun-free zone

DALLAS (BP)—Pistol-packing Texans can't take their guns to church, according to a new state law that allows qualifying adults to carry concealed weapons.

About 1,200 Texans who had passed state-sanctioned firearms training and received licenses were able to carry concealed weapons legally effective Jan. 1. Some state officials have predicted the number will rise to 78,000 by next year.

However, the same law that legalized the carrying of concealed weapons made it illegal to carry handguns, concealed or not, "on the premises of a church, synagogue or other established place of religious worship."

"Churches don't have to do anything to declare themselves weapon-free zones. The law already does that," said Phil Strickland, director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"The law is written broadly enough to include not only church sanctuaries, but also any part of the church property including offices, educational buildings or fellowship halls."

The concealed firearms law also prohibits handguns in hospitals, nursing homes, amusement parks, schools, sports venues, correctional facilities and bars.

Unlike churches, the law requires Baptist hospitals and homes for the aging to display a notice in both English and Spanish that it is illegal to carry a handgun on their premises. They must display signs with one-inch-tall block letters conspicuously at each entrance of their facilities.

Many other Texas workplaces began the New Year posting signs declaring themselves weapon-free zones. Among them was the Baptist General Convention of Texas office building in Dallas.

Signs at the front door and at the parking garage elevators of the Baptist Building state, "Entry with firearms or other weapons is prohibited." The signs warn violators they may be prosecuted.

"In light of the concealed handgun legislation, we wanted to take reasonable precautions to provide a safe working environment for our employees and to provide for the safety of our guests," said Roger Hall, the state convention's treasurer and chief financial officer.

A concealed-weapons law has been introduced in this year's Kentucky General Assembly, but it does not currently contain the same provision as the Texas law declaring churches gun-free zones.

## Left and right unite to fight gambling

By David Anderson  
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—In a rare show of unity on a public-policy issue, the liberal National Council of Churches and the conservative Christian Coalition said Jan. 17 they would work together to try to stop the spread of legal gambling in the United States.

"When the Christian Coalition and the National Council of Churches join together on an issue, that's remarkable," said Ralph Reed, executive director of the Christian Coalition.

Reed spoke at a news conference to announce the opening of a Washington office of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling.

He was joined by Tom Grey, a United Methodist minister and executive director of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling; Mary Cooper, associate director of the National Council of Churches' Washington office; and representatives of the United Methodist

Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA).

The new Washington office, to be headed by Grey, is an expansion of a modest effort he began in Chicago. He said the interfaith effort announced Jan. 17 was a signal that the nation's religious community is ready to take the offense against the gambling industry.

Some form of gambling is legal in all but two states—Utah and Hawaii. In 1992, some \$329 billion was legally wagered in the nation, according to both proponents and opponents of legalized gambling. The figure includes state-sponsored lotteries.

Between 1989 and 1994, 19 states legalized commercial gambling casinos and 10 states legalized video slot or poker machines at race tracks and bars.

Frank Fahrenkopf Jr., president of the American Gaming Association, a Washington-based trade association of large casino operators, said he was not surprised at the

opening of the office.

"Our attitude is that people who don't agree with us have the right to organize and pursue their agenda," Fahrenkopf said.

"If they want to say that gaming is immoral, that's fine and I respect them for that. But I resent it when he (Grey) and others point their fingers at me and the eight of 10 Americans who don't believe that," Fahrenkopf said.

At the top of the anti-gambling effort's priorities, Grey said, is establishment of a national commission to investigate legalized gambling's economic impact on cities, its alleged ties to organized crime and the political influence the gambling industry wields through campaign contributions.

Legislation to create the commission has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va., and in the Senate by Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill. President Clinton has voiced support for the idea.

## Episcopal trial asks new question

WILMINGTON, Del. (RNS)—Did retired Episcopal Bishop Walter Righter commit heresy when he ordained a non-celibate homosexual as a deacon in 1990?

A nine-member Episcopal Church court was scheduled to decide that question Feb. 27-29 at a trial in Wilmington, Del.

But now the church has announced that before the court can weigh Righter's guilt or innocence, it first must decide an even more basic question: Does the church have a doctrine forbidding homosexual ordination? If it doesn't, Righter's trial—now moved to May 13—may never occur.

The decision to split the proceedings into two parts is the latest in a series of maneuvers leading up to the 71-year-old cleric's trial, which would mark only the second time this century that an Episcopal bishop has been tried for heresy. In 1924, a retired bishop was found guilty of heresy for writing a book that said communism was replacing Christianity and that Jesus' divinity was a myth.

Righter, a former bishop of Iowa, is charged with teaching false doctrine and violating his ordination vows for ordaining Barry Stopfel, a non-celibate gay, as a deacon in September 1990.

## Poll: Death penalty views not tied to religion

PRINCETON, N.J.—Religious beliefs make little difference in whether a person supports the death penalty, according to the Gallup Poll.

A nationwide survey of American adults found that 77 percent favor the death penalty.

Among those who say religion is very important in their lives, 75 percent favor the death penalty. That compares with 69 percent support for the death penalty among adults who

consider religion not very important in their lives.

The group that is most likely to favor the death penalty—although more likely by a relatively small degree—is American adults who consider religion fairly important in their lives. Among this group, 84 percent favor the death penalty.

"Although some church leaders and denominations are in the vanguard of those who oppose the death

penalty, religion does not appear to have much influence upon opinions concerning it," the Gallup organization reports in its monthly newsletter Emerging Trends.

Overall public support for the death penalty hit its highest point in 1994, with 80 percent of all American adults favoring it. The low point for public support of the death penalty was in 1966, with only 42 percent favoring it.

## Reprimand asked for ambassador to Vatican

ROME (RNS)—Raymond Flynn, U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, said Jan. 11 he was doing his job when he fired off a letter to business and religious leaders last spring that said congressional efforts to cut U.S. anti-poverty programs were "mean-spirited" and "immoral."

But a State Department official investigating the matter doesn't see it that way.

Inspector General Jacquelyn Williams-Bridgers is recommending a formal reprimand against Flynn for writing a letter that created the "appearance of partisanship"

and for failing to get it approved or "cleared" before mailing it.

The recommendation, issued in a Dec. 19 report that has not been formally released, was sent to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who will make a final determination on whether to accept the proposal. A reprimand would likely amount to a blemish on Flynn's record, but not require his dismissal.

An official rebuke also would be something of a political victory for Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Helms complained to

Christopher in a letter last July that the Flynn letter strongly suggested Democrats were more sensitive than Republicans to the Catholic Church's teachings on poverty and other social issues.

Flynn, a Catholic and former Boston mayor who is credited with helping President Clinton win Catholic votes in the 1992 presidential election, was unrepentant.

"I still don't see the letter as partisan at all," he said in an interview. "I have a job to do. I feel I had an obligation and I still feel that the message was totally accurate."

### NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Super Bowl special.** An edited one-hour video of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention's "Super Rally '96" will air four times before the Super Bowl on ACTS and FamilyNet, the cable and broadcast television services of the Southern Baptist Radio & Television Commission. The event is to be taped Jan. 24 at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Phoenix and will feature country singer Ricky Skaggs.

■ **Nuns challenge pope.** The National Coalition of American Nuns has challenged a recent Vatican pronouncement that the longstanding Roman Catholic teaching that

women cannot be priests is "infallible." The independent group of several hundred nuns said this teaching "cannot be infallible because the teaching is unjust and therefore, in error. The church may not employ gender to limit the call of the Holy Spirit to minister in a priestly fashion."

■ **Administration eats pastors' time.** The longstanding belief that ministers spend substantial amounts of time on routine administrative matters is supported by a new study reported by the Review of Religious Research. Professors Gary William Kuhne and Joe Donaldson studied

the daily schedules of a sample of Protestant ministers in detail and found that at least one-third of a day's schedule was taken up by office administration at the expense of counseling, study, sermon preparation and community activity.

■ **Clinton praises King.** President Clinton praised Martin Luther King Jr. Jan. 16 as a man who "redeemed the moral purpose" of the nation. During a service honoring the life and legacy of the slain civil-rights leader, Clinton spoke from the pulpit of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King preached regularly.

## Politicians and preachers join hands in Memphis

**"We are on the threshold of the most important election of our lifetime."**

*Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition*

*Continued from page 1*

20-foot-high statue of Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II to declare their own assertion that God wants liberal government to "let my people go."

Six Republican candidates and one Libertarian candidate mounted the platform to explain their positions on abortion, school prayer, taxation and foreign relations. In between, prominent conservative preachers and lobbyists spoke about the ills that have befallen America and what must be done to change the course.

President Clinton was invited to address the conference but declined. Republican candidates Bob Dole, Lamar Alexander and Steve Forbes also declined to attend.

McAteer said the absence of several prominent candidates and the lower-than-expected turnout did not indicate any lessening of importance of the National Affairs Briefing, which gained prominence with a 1980 meeting in Dallas which drew 20,000 people. Fewer than 5,000 people were in the meeting hall for any one session of this year's briefing, far below the 20,000 participants McAteer had predicted earlier.

Those who did come were influential pastors and decision-makers in the Religious Right movement, he asserted. The event's impact also will be stretched by distribution of audio and video tapes of the sessions.

Asked about the candidates who chose not to appear, McAteer said, "That's their craziness."

He compared their decision to how foolish he would have been in his previous career as a toothpaste salesman to have neglected invitations to pitch his product at Wal-Mart and Kroger.

Across the four sessions of the briefing, speakers ranged from the sedate, like Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., to the sensational, like Texas pastor and televangelist John Hagee.

"When the government condones what God condemns, it's time for Christians to stand up and speak out against government," Hagee shouted to a thundering ovation.

Hagee, pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas, outlined a platform touched on in some way by virtually every other speaker.

"We want a president who can stand against abortion," he said as his first point.

"We want a president who will

stand against the welfare system as we know it," he added next. "The Bible says those who will not work should not eat."

"We want a president who will stand against crime," he said third.

Remaining planks in Hagee's platform included protection for private property, speaking against the "toxic poison of Hollywood," giving families a \$500 tax break and implementing a flat tax, standing by Israel and standing by the Bible.

"If evangelical Christians cannot find a man or a party who will stand with us, we have the power and authority to form a third party which will honor Judeo-Christian values," he warned.

Issues that repeatedly drew the loudest ovations from the crowd were abortion, school prayer and the United Nations.

Opposition to abortion was portrayed as the most essential plank in the Religious Right's checklist for presidential candidates.

"Legalized abortion on demand is the core problem affecting our body politic," said Wanda Franz, director of National Right to Life.

"We must focus on abortion and make it once again a crime under the law," she said, asserting that Christians are "morally obliged to be single-issue voters regarding the issue of abortion."

Republican candidate Pat Buchanan called himself the "pro-life candidate you can trust," saying most other candidates who talk about opposition to abortion don't actually have a track record to support their campaign promises.

"I will be the most pro-life president in history," Buchanan pledged.

Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, positioned himself as the one candidate who can deliver on abortion and all other issues conservatives want in a presidential candidate.

"Republicans want the answer to two questions," he said. "First, who can beat Bill Clinton? Second, who would change America if elected? The answers are Phil Gramm and Phil Gramm."

Gramm portrayed Dole, his chief rival for the Republican nomination, as a compromising moderate who can be found "on three sides of a two-sided issue," particularly when that issue is abortion.

The school prayer issue took center stage in the Saturday afternoon session, when about 1,500 residents of Pontotoc County, Miss., marched into the meeting hall carrying placards and wearing T-shirts emblazoned with the words "Religious Freedom."

The group was introduced by Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Okla., who has proposed a Religious Equality Amendment to the Constitution. He has said such an amendment is necessary to ensure that children

have the right to pray in public schools and to protect religious expression in general.

Pontotoc County's public school system currently is engaged in a major legal battle over school prayer. The question of whether the school district's practice of allowing students to deliver prayers and Bible readings over the school intercom system is constitutional could make it to the Supreme Court.

Criticism of the United States participating with the United Nations drew shouts and claps of support every time the subject was mentioned.

Several speakers referred to the case of Army specialist Michael New, who currently is facing court-martial charges for refusing to work under the command of the United Nations in Bosnia. Two speakers on the program serve on New's legal team.

"The United Nations wants to take over our country," warned Beverly LaHaye, president of Concerned Women for America. "This is the most anti-family organization in the world today. Nothing they do supports the family."

Other issues cited as concerns by speakers and vowed in pledges by candidates included reinstating a ban on gays in the military, abolishing the U.S. Department of Education, shutting down the National Endowment for the Arts, protecting the right of cit-

izens to bear arms without restriction and cracking down on crime.

Despite all the talk about balanced budgets, flat taxes and limited foreign relations, several speakers drove home the point that America's problems have spiritual roots more than political roots.

The most important issue today is not the economy but morality, said Ralph Reed, director of the Christian Coalition.

"Who's to blame for this enormous decline?" asked James Kennedy, pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Coral Ridge, Fla. "A great part of the blame has to be placed right at the doorstep of the church."

The church today "needs courage to face a godless world and proclaim the claims of Jesus Christ," he said.

"We're in the moral shape we're in because of apathy in church," added Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association.

Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, agreed. "The problem in America begins with us," he said. "We must be a moral disinfectant in society."

Nevertheless, conservative evangelical Christians have demonstrated in the past that they can make a difference in the political system, several speakers said. The 1996 elections are a crucial time to show that strength again, they added.

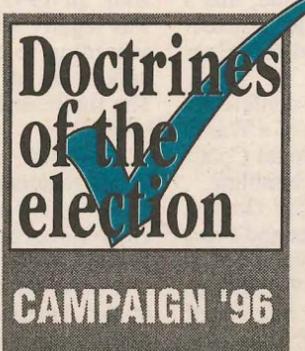
"We are on the threshold of the most important election of our lifetime," said Reed of the Christian Coalition. "We will elect a president for the next millennium."

Jerry Falwell related how he formed the Moral Majority in 1979 to invigorate evangelical and fundamentalist Christians toward political involvement.

"The 1980 National Affairs Briefing and Ronald Reagan put a stop to the headlong fall of our nation," but new problems have surfaced today, Falwell asserted.

"We had a glorious awakening back in 1980. But it seems to me we've fallen into a slumber."

Nonetheless, Reed of the Christian Coalition issued a warning to all candidates about the continued importance of the Religious Right: "We are here to stay. We are not going to go away."



## Evangelist says Bush lost re-election for failing Jews

**By Mark Wingfield**  
*Interim Editor*

MEMPHIS, Tenn.—George Bush failed to win a second term as president of the United States because he foolishly forsook Israel, a Dutch-born evangelist said at the National Affairs Briefing Jan. 19.

Jan Willem van der Hoeven, a founder of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, said Bush was a shoo-in for re-election in 1992, until he took the advice of Secretary of State James Baker and turned his back on Israel.

Specifically, after standing by Israel during the Persian Gulf War,

Bush denied loan guarantees to Israel and denied Israelis support for settling in the West Bank, van der Hoeven said.

At the end of the Gulf War, Bush enjoyed a 91 percent approval rating from the American public, he said, noting that should have easily ushered him in to a second term.

"You may think with 91 percent of the vote you don't need the vote of the Jews, but you need the vote of the God of the Jews," van der Hoeven declared.

The evangelist, who has lived in Israel for the last 30 years and formerly worked as guardian of the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, said he wrote

evangelist Billy Graham and pleaded with him to help Bush see the error of his way before it was too late. The plea was to no avail.

How any nation or leader treats Israel is a litmus test for God's favor on that nation or individual, van der Hoeven asserted.

"When England was good to the Jews, God was good to England. ... Today, England is a decadent, small nation. God gave the crown to America. ... Now you're on the same road as England," he warned.

van der Hoeven, who speaks with the fiery passion of an old-style evangelist, was warmly received by the crowd of deeply conservative evan-

gelicals gathered in the Memphis Pyramid, although the audience showed restrained support for some of his points.

For example, he received a less-than-overwhelming response to statements such as, "I pray that the next president will put Jerusalem before Washington, D.C., and Israel before America."

Some segments of the conservative evangelical community in America put great stock in being kind to Israel, in part because of their understanding of the end-times and their literal reading of Scriptures such as Psalm 122:6, which admonishes to

□ See Bush's vote with ..., page 9

## America must turn from its wicked ways, Rogers warns

By Mark Wingfield  
Interim Editor

MEMPHIS, Tenn.—The United States must turn from its wicked ways, humble itself and pray anew for God's deliverance or else face extinction, Adrian Rogers said at the National Affairs Briefing Jan. 19.

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis and three-time president of the Southern Baptist Convention, delivered a keynote message during the first session of the briefing, organized by one of his church members, Ed McAteer.

"God has sounded the alarm, and we dare not touch the snooze button," Rogers declared. "The nation that was born in 1776 must be born again or it will join the graveyard of the nations."

The problem is an attack from the inside rather than the outside, he said. "If America dies, it will be not by homicide but by suicide."

America still ranks No. 1 among the nations, but unfortunately is No. 1 in "homosexuality, radical feminism, divorce, destruction of family values, the occult, crime and violence," Rogers said.

He called for a return to the founding principles of the nation. "Our Declaration was founded on belief in God," he said. "You don't have to be a Greek scholar or a rocket scientist to figure that out."

This national problem boils down to failures on the individual level, Rogers said.

"Americans today are more concerned about a balanced budget than they are righteousness," he declared. "We're trying to make America a better place to go to hell from."

While he's not against a balanced budget, the problem is much deeper than a government-prescribed fix, Rogers said. "Government cannot make us good; only God can do that."

The answer to America's problems is found in II Chronicles 7:14,

Rogers said. That verse, familiar to many Christians, says, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

The future of America is not hopeless, Rogers asserted. "As long as there's a God in the glory, there's a hope for America."

Because of America's sin, God has turned his face away from the nation he once blessed, Rogers said.

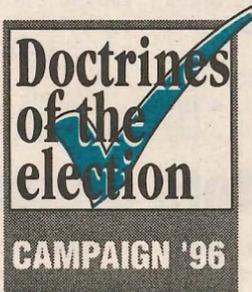
Natural disasters such as blizzards and earthquakes, along with medical disasters such as AIDS, are not signs of God's direct judgment on America as some believe, Rogers said. "When God judges, he will judge with much more exactness than that."

"It is just simply that God has ceased to protect this nation as he was. The hedge has been broken down."

And the longer God's protection is withheld from America, the worse things will get, Rogers predicted. "America needs a peace treaty with the Prince of Peace."

van der Hoeven said he fears American Christians are too "patriotic" and "self-centered" to support Israel as much as they should. "There is more in the Bible about Jerusalem than gun control or whatever. Six hundred times as much," he said.

To American Christians, he warned: "Your life begins and ends with yourself."



## Bush's vote with Israel cited

Continued from page 8

"pray for the peace of Jerusalem." However, this same cluster of conservative evangelicals also supports an "America first" policy, tied to their fears of America's loss of jobs to foreign countries and the perceived threat of a one-world government administered by the United Nations.

In an interview after his speech,

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**SEEKING:** 25-year-old exurban Southern Baptist congregation with 150 members (25 miles from Washington D.C.) prayerfully seeks senior pastor having minimum of 5 years experience, master's degree from Southern Baptist seminary preferred. Candidate should be Bible-based, family-oriented and possess the abilities to coordinate current staff including a strong, vibrant music program. Send resumé by Feb. 14 to: P.O. Box 326, Poolesville, MD 20837.

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**SEEKING:** Part-time music director for Sunday services and adult choir. Warm, music-loving church, N. Kentucky Association. Send resumé to: Crescent Springs Baptist Church, 627 Buttermilk Pike, Crescent Springs, KY 41017.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

### 1996 State Evangelism Conference

February 26-27  
Eastwood Baptist Church  
500 Eastwood Avenue  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

*Please Note:* The Office for Evangelism provides this information for your convenience. Please exercise personal discretion in the selection of appropriate accommodations. A few motels/hotels have given special rates. If so, they are noted below. Telephone a hotel if you have specific questions about its services or policies and confirm rate when making reservation.

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1021 Wilkinson Trace  
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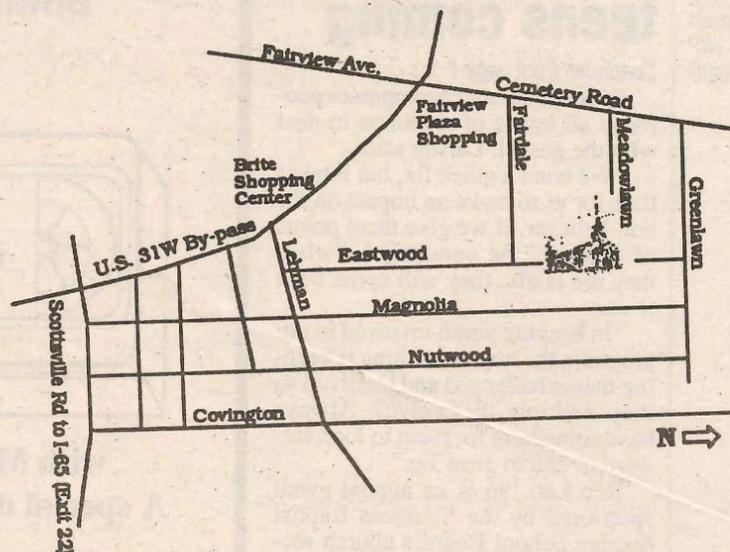
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Directions to Eastwood Baptist Church  
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# MINISTRY

## Encourage 'Christmanship' in recreation ministries

**"It's easy to be a Christian in Sunday school, but when you are in athletic competition, it can be a completely different thing."**

*Greg Linville*

By Charles Willis  
SBC Sunday School Board

LAKE YALE, Fla. (BP)—"Christmanship"—the concept of mankind bearing Christ—should be substituted for sportsmanship in athletic competitions, according to a longtime coach and church recreation director.

"We believe Christ is caught more than he is taught," observed Greg Linville, director of recreational ministry at Canton (Ohio) First Friends Church. "People will not hear your words if your faith is not lived out.

Linville spoke at Rec Lab '96 Jan. 5-11, an annual training event for church recreators sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"Our faith is a struggle, as in an athletic competition," Linville continued. "It's easy to be a Christian in Sunday school, but when you are in athletic competition, it can be a completely different thing. If you can control yourself in an inconsequential situation like sports, you can control yourself in other, more crucial life situations."

While competition is amoral, people can choose to act in moral or immoral ways during competition, he said. Society only rewards winners, and as a result, sportsmanship "devel-

oping at any cost.

For believers in Christ, Linville said, bearing Christ and encompassing all that is good in sportsmanship can result in a higher standard he calls "Christmanship."



In relating to teammates, he said, such a standard results in athletes "who strive to do the thing that will enhance a teammate's performance, including sacrificing one's own ambitions for the benefit of a teammate."

Athletes must always play with full intensity, he observed, while striving to live at peace with every

other teammate.

Coaches, he said, must coach with the players' best interest at heart, attempt to win for the players and attempt to mold Christian men and women.

Officials must be viewed as facilitators, not enemies, Linville maintained. They must be viewed as people created in the image of God, and they must be loved, not "worked."

Opponents, in Christmanship, are viewed as co-competitors, not enemies. They also should be encouraged to succeed and pushed to excellence. Linville cites scriptural bases for every point, including Proverbs 27:17, which instructs that iron sharpens iron.

Linville said he believes competitors sharpen each other.

## Interdenominational recreators group formed

LAKE YALE, Fla. (BP)—Church recreators have crossed denominational lines to form a national support organization thought to be the first of its kind.

The National Association of Church Recreators was introduced during the 31st anniversary meeting of Rec Lab, an annual week-long event sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. However, the new group will be separate from the Rec Lab event and the Sunday School Board.

Organizers said the National Association of Church Recreators will be a Christ-centered, biblically based, national, ecumenical group committed to Christian ministry through sports and recreation.

A nine-member board of directors has selected Bob Sessoms, minister of recreation at First Baptist Church of

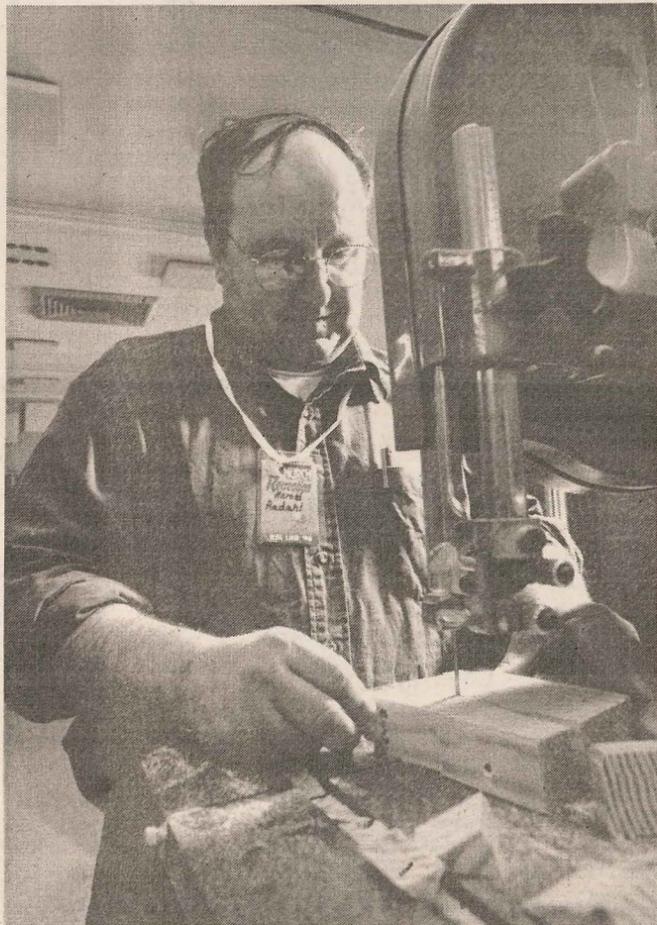
Concord in Knoxville, Tenn., as the association's first president and has outlined 10 goals.

The goals call for sharing of ideas, developing professionalism, developing a personal support system, developing conferences within the field, developing a sports and recreation certification program, encouraging development of recreation ministry in local churches, and encouraging related curricula and degrees in Christian colleges and seminaries.

Other officers are Butch Garman, director of sports ministry at Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, Tenn., vice president; Jim Riley, director of recreation ministry at Highland Park Presbyterian Church of Dallas, secretary; and Greg Linville, director of recreation ministry at First Friends Church of Canton, Ohio, treasurer.

Board members planning to seek legal incorporation for the association, in addition to the first slate of officers, are Tim Adcox, minister of recreation and singles ministry at Smoke Rise Baptist Church in Stone Mountain, Ga.; Jan Averwater, director of recreation ministries at Christ United Methodist Church in Memphis, Tenn.; Bob Farmer, minister of recreation at First Baptist Church of Owensboro; Roger Oswald, executive director of Church Sports International, San Jose, Calif.; and Barb Wagenfuhr, director of recreation at First Presbyterian Church of Colorado Springs, Colo.

Christian recreators interested in obtaining information about the proposed association may contact Sessoms at 11705 Mountain View Rd., Knoxville, Tenn. 37922 or by leaving a message at (423) 675-1194.



**CUTTING IT CLOSE** Harold Aadahl of Orcutt Baptist Church concentrates on a woodworking project during Rec Lab '96. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

## Ministry keeps teens coming

*Continued from page 1*

Sports ministry encompasses people at all levels of readiness to deal with the gospel, Larson said.

"We want a quick fix, but it takes time for us to make an impact on the non-believer. If we give them points of contact," he concluded, "when they are ready, they will come back to us."

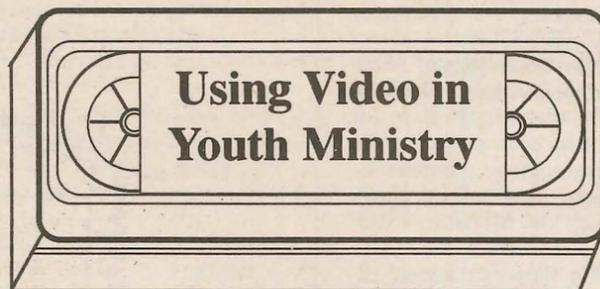
"In keeping youth involved in our program, the important thing is keeping them challenged and involved so they multiply themselves. Always have something for them to look forward to and to grow on."

Rec Lab '96 is an annual event sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church recreation program.

### Kentucky Youth Leaders ...

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### By Reservation Only!

To reserve your space at this year's Dialogue Luncheon, return this portion of the ad with a check made payable to the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Cost: \$7 per person. Reply by Feb. 16, 1996.

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## 1996 Regional Conferences

# Financial Issues for Ministers and Churches

Sponsored by the Annuity Board, SBC, Annuity Department of KBC, and Kentucky Baptist Foundation

## WHEN AND WHERE

Mon., Feb. 19	Paducah	First Baptist Church	Thurs., Feb. 22	London	First Baptist Church
Tues., Feb. 20	Madisonville	First Baptist Church	Fri., Feb. 23	Lexington	Immanuel Baptist Church
Wed., Feb. 21	Louisville	Walnut Street Baptist Church			

10:00 AM - 3:30 PM Lunch included

## CONFERENCE LEADERS



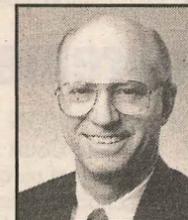
**Don Spencer, CFP**  
Director, Annuity Department  
Kentucky Baptist Convention



**Laurie Valentine**  
Trust Counsel  
Kentucky Baptist Foundation



**Bruce Sides**  
Vice President, Member Services  
Annuity Board, SBC



**John Dudley**  
Vice President, Property & Casualty  
Annuity Board, SBC

## TOPICS

### 1. Planning for this Year and Next Year Tax Update

*Don Spencer, CFP*  
Director, Annuity Department, KBC

This session will focus on several recent tax events that affect churches and ministers:

- The IRS issued a Tax Guide for Churches and Other Religious Organizations
- An Audit Technique Guide for use by IRS agents in auditing ministers was released.
- The IRS has targeted numerous ministers in Kentucky for MSSP audits
- The IRS issued regulations regarding charitable contribution substantiation
- A tax court ruled on the tax filing status of a minister. This ruling was upheld by a federal appeals court.
- IRS publication 517 now includes instructions and an illustration applying the controversial Deason ruling to minister's tax returns.

### 2. Planning for Today and Tomorrow Basic Considerations in Christian Estate Planning

*Laurie Valentine*  
Trust Counsel, Kentucky Baptist Foundation

A Christian estate plan reflects God's will for your possessions. It includes providing for your family at your death and the management of your affairs if you become incapacitated. Topics to be explored during this session include:

- Why do I need a Will?
- What taxes will be payable at my death?
- Is there other planning I need to consider in addition to making a Will?
- What choices do I have for distributions to young children or other persons who will need money management help at my death?
- What happens to my assets if I have not made a Will?

### 3. Protection for Today and Tomorrow Annuity Board Update

*Bruce Sides*  
Vice President, Member Service, Annuity Board, SBC

Improvements are being made in Annuity Board insurance and retirement plans during 1996 and 1997. New computer software and technology will enable enhanced Annuity Board services. Current participants in Annuity Board retirement plans utilize four investment funds: Fixed, Variable, Balanced and International. In 1997 these funds will be replaced with a new investment structure giving participants expanded investment opportunities.

This session will feature an introduction and explanation of these and other coming changes.

### 4. Protecting Church Assets Church and Minister Liability Issues

*John Dudley*  
Vice President, Property & Casualty, Annuity Board, SBC

Suing the church is no longer just a threat. Almost 400 Southern Baptist churches will be sued in 1995. Ministries and church sponsored activities involve exposures to risks that can result in potential liability.

This conference will offer strategies for identifying and managing these risks. Church trustees and others responsible for obtaining the church's property and casualty coverage will benefit by attending.

**Those attending need to pre-register with the Annuity Department of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Enclose a check for \$ 7.00 per person, payable to: Kentucky Baptist Convention.**

**Send to:**

**Annuity Department  
Kentucky Baptist Convention,  
PO Box 43433, Middletown, KY 40253.**

**For more information call the Annuity Department of the Kentucky Baptist Convention at 245-4101.**

# COURTS

## Both sides agree on one thing: Mississippi law is bad

### Court won't hear Wiccan challenge

WASHINGTON (ABP)—The U.S. Supreme Court refused Jan. 16 to hear a former soldier's claim that his 20-month sentence on cocaine-related charges should be reduced because he was denied use of a pagan religious text while he was jailed awaiting trial. After trial before a military judge at Fort Bragg, N.C., Allen L. Phillips Jr. was discharged for bad conduct and sentenced to 20 months' confinement. On appeal to two military review courts, he argued that denying him use of a document used as a religious text by the Wiccan religion violated his First Amendment right to free exercise of religion. Both appeals were rejected. Phillips was awaiting trial in the Cumberland County (N.C.) Jail when he was refused access to the Book of Shadows, sometimes referred to as the Wiccan bible.

Testimony during Phillips' trial showed that a jailer denied access to the text because Wicca "wasn't a recognized religious practice in the state of North Carolina." In an unrelated action Jan. 16, the Supreme Court rejected a second attempt by a state to restrict Medicaid funding of abortion. Without comment, justices let stand a federal-appeals-court ruling that invalidated Nebraska's Medicaid policy of paying for abortions only if they are performed to save the life of the mother.

A federal law which provides funding for abortions in cases of rape and incest, as well as to save the life of the mother, pre-empts Nebraska's policy, the appeals court said.

NEW ORLEANS (RNS)—It's not often that Jay Sekulow of the conservative American Center for Law and Justice and Elliot Minberg of the liberal advocacy group People For the American Way agree on a school-prayer issue.

But both men said Jan. 11 they agreed with a federal appeals court decision that dealt another blow to a Mississippi law that required public schools to permit student-initiated prayers at all school events—voluntary and compulsory alike.

"It's a bad law" because it went too far, said Sekulow, chief counsel for the public-interest legal group founded by evangelist Pat Robertson, who also established the Christian

Coalition.

While the Christian Coalition's agenda includes supporting prayer in public schools, Sekulow, who is based in Virginia Beach, Va., said the Mississippi law "does not have much meaning insofar as the overall school prayer issue is concerned because it was so poorly written."

Minberg, legal director of People For the American Way, a staunch advocate of strict church-state separation, agreed. "The Mississippi statute was clearly unconstitutional because it forced students who did not want to participate to listen to prayers at school events simply because other students wanted the prayers recited," he said from his office in Washing-

ton.

On Jan. 10, a three-judge panel of the 5th District U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, sitting in New Orleans, upheld a lower court decision that found the Mississippi law unconstitutional. However, the appeals court agreed with the lower court that student-initiated, non-sectarian and non-proselytizing prayers are allowable at commencement exercises because they occur infrequently.

In 1992, the same appellate court ruled that voluntary, student-led and student-initiated prayers were constitutional. That set the stage for the Mississippi legislature to approve the broad law now in the courts.

The appeals court noted that its lat-

est decision in no way infringed upon the existing constitutional right of students who want to pray on their own on school property.

Sekulow and Minberg agreed on that as well. But Minberg—whose organization joined with the Mississippi chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union to challenge the law in 1994—said the issue of prayer at school commencement events is still to be decided. Ultimately, he said, the Supreme Court will have to settle the issue.

The high court could get a chance with the Mississippi law. Mississippi Attorney General Mike Moore said he would appeal this week's appellate ruling further.

## Supreme Court won't hear challenge to condom distribution

WASHINGTON (ABP)—The U.S. Supreme Court rebuffed an effort by a group of parents and students to halt a school district's policy offering condoms to junior- and senior-high-school students in Falmouth, Mass.

Justices offered no rationale Jan. 8 when they refused to review a ruling by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts that upheld the Falmouth school district's policy. The district set up its condom-availability program in 1992 in an effort to combat AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

The Falmouth program made condoms available free of charge to junior- and senior-high-school students who asked for them. In addition, condom-vending machines were installed

in high-school restrooms.

Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice advanced the case for the parents, who claimed the policy violated their rights to control the education and upbringing of their children, as well as their rights to free exercise of religion.

The Massachusetts court rejected both claims.

The court acknowledged that the Constitution protects the liberty interests of parents in raising their children as they see fit. But, because the Falmouth policy is voluntary, it does not unconstitutionally violate parental liberties, the court said. Parents remain free, the court noted, to instruct their children not to participate.

The court also said the parents failed to show that the condom policy

"substantially burdened" their religious liberty.

While the Constitution protects the free exercise of religion, the court rea-

soned, it does not require government to tailor public-school programs to meet the individual religious preferences of parents.



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### Heritage society to help children

Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children has recently established the Mary Hollingsworth Heritage Society to provide recognition for those individuals who have included the children's ministry in their estate plans.

The purpose of the society is to give strength, stability and certainty to KBHC's future by encouraging our supporters to make after-life gifts through their estates.

The society has been named for one of the early guiding lights of Baptist children's ministry. Mary Hollingsworth was the first superintendent of the Louisville Baptist Orphans' Home which welcomed the first three children into care on June 30, 1869. "Miss Mary," as she was known, served children for 35 years.

Originally the ministry reached out to children orphaned by the death of their parents. Since that time, the ministry of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children has become widely diversified as it continues its outreach of love.

Today, Kentucky Baptist embraces orphans of a different kind—those who have been orphaned by living through such tragedies

as neglect, abandonment and family crisis.

The Mary Hollingsworth Society seeks, through its emphasis on planned gifts, to guarantee KBHC's future ministry to the hurting children of our commonwealth.

Membership in the Mary Hollingsworth Society may be secured through one or more of the following ways:

■ a bequest in one's will or living trust.

■ the naming of KBHC as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, retirement program, or commercial annuity.

■ the establishment of a charitable annuity with KBHC.

■ the establishment of a charitable trust with KBHC as a charitable beneficiary.

Charter membership in the Mary Hollingsworth Heritage Society is open through Aug. 31, 1996.

For more information about how you can be a part, call us at (800) 456-1386.

### HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Curtis C. Mooney

Curtis Mooney is president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, 10801 Shelbyville Rd., Middletown, Ky. 40243.

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## FINANCIAL FORUM

### Tips for getting out of debt

By Doug Strader

Without a doubt, being in debt is one of the greatest problems for Americans today. According to Paul Harvey News Nov. 3, 1995, Americans are taking bankruptcy at the rate of two per minute.

As Christians, we need to realize that the way we handle our money is a spiritual matter. See Luke 16:10-11. God is concerned about every aspect of our life, and that includes our material resources.

God does not want us serving money, and if we are heavily indebted, that is what we are doing. Money is to serve us.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared that we cannot serve God and mammon.

Proverbs 22:7 says, "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."

How can you get out of debt?

■ Begin by looking at how you got into debt. Be honest with yourself, and do not make excuses.

■ Set a goal to pay off all credit cards and installment loans in two or three years. (Most people of necessity will still have a house mortgage.)

■ List all of your debts, such as credit cards, bank loans, past-due bills, school bills, etc. Pay off as soon as possible the bill that is the smallest. When that bill is paid in full, apply what you were paying on it each month to the next smallest debt. Continue this process until all debt is paid in full. It is amazing how quickly you can liquidate your debt.

■ Stick to your plan. This will take much discipline on your part, but be persistent. Stop using credit cards, begin using a written budget, cease impulsive buying and stick to your plan. You will be tempted to quit, but do not give in to that temptation. Ask God to help you and to give you strength to stick to your plan.

Remember, the way you handle your money is a spiritual matter.

*Doug Strader is director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's stewardship department*

## Texas church files bankruptcy

AUSTIN, Texas (BP)—Facing foreclosure on a \$15 million overdue debt, a Southern Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, has filed for bankruptcy protection.

Much of the debt weighing down Great Hills Baptist Church was incurred in construction of a 3,600-seat sanctuary and 75,000-square-foot education building during the economic boom in the early 1980s.

With 3,895 members, Great Hills is the third-largest congregation in Austin Baptist Association.

The church's pastor for 27 years, Harold O'Chester, said the bankruptcy filing in federal court will not interrupt the congregation's services and ministries.

Great Hills trustee chairman Herschel Kelley said the church had considered seeking bankruptcy protection much earlier but did not because "the idea of a church filing for bankruptcy was abhorrent, and we thought we could work it out without doing that."

The church filed for Chapter 11, which permits an organization to continue operating while negotiating a plan of reorganization with creditors.

Bankruptcy lawyer Stephen

Sather, representing the church, called the action "the last fallout from the real estate crash of the 1980s."

In the early 1980s, Great Hills planned to build a new facility on a new site without incurring significant debt. But investors who bought the church's original property and 12 additional acres for about \$6 million defaulted, and the savings and loan which had issued a letter of credit guaranteeing the transaction also went broke. Great Hills lost the property to foreclosure and ended up seeking \$9 million in high-interest bonds.

When Great Hills missed its third payment on the loan eight years ago, cost-cutting measures were implemented which resulted in all but one staff member being released.

Sunday school attendance dropped to 750. The church is now growing rapidly and is trying to restructure its total debt, O'Chester said.

The church has made some payment, but with accrued interest costs, Great Hills owes bondholders \$14 million, Sather said. It also owes approximately \$700,000 to other creditors.

## Black churches form partnership

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Five of the nation's largest black church groups have announced the creation of a company that will help businesses sell a variety of consumer products and services to congregation members while earmarking part of the profits to help African-Americans buy their own homes.

The denominations chose the birth date of Martin Luther King Jr. to unveil their ambitious plan to channel some of the \$400 billion annually spent by African-American consumers back into the black community.

"Dr. King wanted the African-American community to move beyond civil rights to silver rights," Bennett W. Smith, president of the 1.8 million-member Progressive National Baptist Convention, said. "We feel we are in some degree helping today to fulfill that dream."

Revelation Corp. of America, a for-profit company, will give a variety of firms, selling everything from automobile supplies to groceries to insurance, an exclusive track to reach the five denominations' estimated 20 million members.

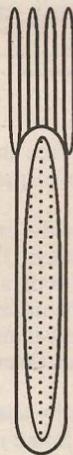
In return, the firms will give church members large discounts on the consumer goods and services and provide rebates to the denominations. The denominations will then invest a portion of those rebates to fund housing construction and underwrite mortgages for African-Americans.

In addition to the Progressive Baptists, the denominations involved are: the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the National Baptist Convention of America and the National Baptist Convention USA.

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Buster Soaries



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Keith Walker

# PEOPLE

## PRAYER PARTNERS

Pray for these specific needs related to Kentucky Baptist Convention partnerships in Russia and Boston:

- Larry and Joy Lindsey, partnership coordinators in Moscow, and Lee and Sarah Bivins, partnership coordinators in St. Petersburg, as they plan for 1996 projects.
- The Brazilian First Baptist Church of Charlestown, Mass., as they renovate their building to include a larger sanctuary. Funds are needed for this project.
- Thom Thornton, Baptist campus minister at Northeastern University in Boston.
- Jack Hart, volunteer at Metropolitan Baptist Church in Cambridge, Mass., as he seeks funds to maintain the church's ministries in the community.

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Living Hope Church ordained **Larry Bolton, Greg Deaton, Rick Aldridge** and **Jeff Meisel** as deacons Jan. 14.

■ **CENTRAL CITY**—**Carson Bevil**, pastor of First Church for four and one-half years, retired Jan. 15, after serving 40 years in pastoral ministry.

■ **CROMWELL**—**Chris Dortch** resigned as pastor at Mount Zion Church to become youth director at Greenwood Church in Bowling Green.

■ **ERLANGER**—Erlanger Church will feature a series of monthly seminars on parenting in the '90s, family values and improving relationships Jan. 14, Feb. 11, March 10, April 14, May 19 and June 10. Speakers include: **Wade Rowatt, Joyce Oliver, Diana Garland, Tom Bloxam** and **Walter Jackson**. For more informa-

tion, call David Wallace at (606) 727-2588.

■ **HENDERSON**—Green Valley Association called **Steve Thompson** as director of missions. Thompson has been pastor at First Church in Morgantown since 1981.

■ **HODGENVILLE**—Parkway Church ordained **Bob Dunaway** as a deacon Dec. 10.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Elkhorn Association called **Sandra Williams** as director of church and community ministries. She previously was church extension director in Western Connecticut Baptist Association.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Walnut Street Church ordained **Mildred Goodman, Susan Barnett** and **Janet Lee** as deacons Jan. 14.

■ **OLATON**—**Gary Daugherty** resigned as pastor of Olaton Church.

## Georgetown coaches net 500 wins

GEORGETOWN—Two of Georgetown College's most successful coaches have reached the 500-win milestone in their respective sports.

Both coaches, head volleyball coach **Donna Hawkins** and head basketball coach **Jim Reid**, have led their teams to national tournament appearances, recruiting some of the best student athletes in the region.

Head volleyball coach **Hawkins** won her 500th game Nov. 11 against Brescia College in the Kentucky Intercollegiate Athletic Conference tournament semifinals.

Head men's basketball coach **Reid** won his 500th game Dec. 1 against Cincinnati Clermont 100-51, adding to his long resume another milestone.

**Reid** has the most wins in the state of Kentucky aside from **Denny Crumb**, head basketball coach at the University of Louisville, who has a 571-215 overall record in his 25th

year.

"Good things happen when you're surrounded by such great people, and I've been real fortunate here at Georgetown," **Reid** said.

In the past 16 years, **Hawkins'** volleyball and softball teams have dominated the Kentucky Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and the Kentucky Women's Intercollegiate Conference. As head coach of the volleyball team, **Hawkins** has been named KIAC coach of the year eight times and Mid-South Conference coach of the year three of the last four years.

As head coach of the women's softball team, **Hawkins** led Georgetown to 309 victories over 14 years and won several KIAC championships.

With her combined totals from coaching in both sports, **Hawkins** is the winningest coach in the college's history.

## Kentuckians earn degrees

Five Kentuckians earned degrees from Southern Baptist seminaries outside the state during December.

**David Cummings** of Owensboro graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. **Elizabeth Ann Black** of Lexington graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Three Kentuckians graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary: **Franklin Scott Harris, Shannan Peery Inman** and **Jane Therese Rowlett**.



*David Cummings  
Owensboro  
Master of divinity*



*Elizabeth Ann Black  
Lexington  
Master of arts in  
Christian education*



*Franklin Scott Harris  
Mayfield  
Master of arts in  
religious education*



*Shannan Peery Inman  
Clinton  
Master of divinity*



*Jane Therese Rowlett  
Hopkinsville  
Master of arts in  
religious education*

## Oneida!

This may sound like a strange title for this column. For weeks now, I have considered writing a series of articles on the facts about Oneida. The past year and a half has convinced me beyond any shadow of a doubt there is still a multitude of Kentucky Baptists who know very little about our ministry.

During 1995 I spoke in dozens of churches, often with our choir sharing in song. Everywhere I have been across the state, I have met a tremendous number of people who confessed to knowing little about Oneida. Usually people have information or pre-conceived ideas that are completely wrong.

It will take several weeks for me to cover the many aspects of the Oneida Baptist Institute. I am going to tell in great detail about everything, including how the farm works and why we have it, how students hear about Oneida and why they come, volunteers and their ministry here, why faculty and staff serve here and the modest compensation they receive, where our money comes from and where it is spent, and much more.

If you keep this series of articles in a folder, by the end of the series you will be able to accurately tell anyone about Oneida. I do not think you will ever find any organization to be more accurate and thorough in explaining the day-to-day functions of their ministry.

I hope my doing this will help you lead young people to Oneida who could benefit from our environment.

We have stated many times in the past that we are not always successful with every student, nor are we the right school for every child. Many young people have needs beyond our capacity to minister. While Jesus constantly admonished his

followers to minister when and where they could, he never asked them to provide beyond their means.

As we look down the road to the Barkley Moore Offering on Fathers' Day, I sincerely hope that every church will look at what we are doing and feel good about the ministry we are trying to provide. I honestly feel if more Kentucky Baptists knew more about Oneida, there would be even greater support.

I do run some risks by sharing in such a forthright way. Some may even be offended with the things I will say. My wife constantly tells me that I am normally too candid. I agree that there have been times when it would have been best to not be as honest as I had been. I also realize you are a part of this ministry. By the grace of God and the generosity of many wonderful people, we have been allowed to serve in this "vineyard." This is his "vineyard" and everyone who prays for us, donates items, volunteers their labor, speaks kind words on our behalf, and supports us in a financial way is entitled to know as much as possible about this work.

It is my hope and prayer that the vast majority of people who read these articles will feel better about our ministry and be glad they have a part in all we do. We are only able to serve because God has allowed us the opportunity, and because of the generosity of Kentucky Baptists and many other wonderful people across the United States.

Please continue to remember Oneida in your prayers for 1996. God truly blessed us in a marvelous way in 1995. We look forward to young people finding Jesus as their personal Lord and

*W.F. "Bud" Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Oneida, Ky. 40972*

### THIS IS ONEIDA



*W.F. Underwood*

## Ask ... seek ... knock

Last fall as preparations were being made for the opening of the Bosnia peace talks, I had a fresh encounter with God at Arline Baptist Church in Dayton, very near the base where the peace talks occurred.

**Vernon Ware** asked me to preach and make his church more aware of Clear Creek. I agreed to attend the 8:30 Sunday morning

deacons' prayer time. Four of us gathered and prayed for nearly an hour, literally "prostrate before the Lord." The Lord convicted me of the need for more prayer in my own ministry and I made a covenant with **Pastor Ware** and the deacons to ask two students to join me in prayer at the beginning of each work day, beginning the next day.

One the drive back to Pineville, I decided to begin with student body president **Jeff Harris**. At 7:45 a.m., he arrived with vice president **Gary Baker**. I discovered they already had a regular prayer time together each Monday morning.

**Gray** agreed to come the next morning and bring a different student. The practice has continued since then on each day I am in the office. My life has been immeasurably blessed and I trust it has made a difference in the life of the col-

lege.

We claim the promises. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I will be with you. Ask...Seek...Knock..." Answers to prayers, written in red, dot my prayer journal. One morning **Rusty** requested prayer for his mother-in-law's house to sell so she could move into his home. His house payment would then stop, and the family financial condition would improve. That night **Rusty** called to report the exciting news: "The house sold! A buyer came today, praise the Lord!"

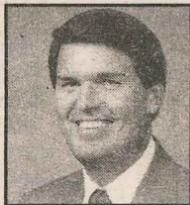
Consider some things about prayer I've learned. A scheduled time with others adds accountability and encourages the practice of prayer. Relationships are stronger. As I inter-

act on the campus, prayer petitions become shared concerns and an opening for dialogue on other needs. In the two months following the beginning of this practice, I faced some difficult situations. The Lord prepared and strengthened me.

Jesus desired his church to be "a house of prayer." Would he want Clear Creek to be any less?

*Bill Whittaker is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, Ky. 40977*

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



*Bill Whittaker*

## Movie portrays nun's journey with capital punishment

By Bruce Nolan  
Religion News Service

NEW ORLEANS (RNS)—As a child in the early 1950s, Helen Prejean drifted off to sleep bathed in the security of a middle-class Catholic home, lulled by the sound of her parents murmuring the rosary.

"Catholicism," she said, "was in our DNA."

As a nun 30 years later, her faith, profoundly reshaped, led her to live and work with the poor in the St. Thomas public housing development in New Orleans, where the sound of occasional gunfire jerked her awake at night.

Eventually her midnights came in yet another place: the death house at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, where her encounters with three executions—and later with the enduring, unsatisfied pain of crime victims' families—transformed Prejean into America's most vocal opponent of the death penalty, and an advocate for increased regard for families ravaged by crime.

It is a journey told in "Dead Man Walking," her 1993 book that was filmed as a motion picture in New Orleans last summer and was released nationally last week.

The early reviews are raves; for Prejean, 56, it is a heady moment. She attended a New York premiere; "Prime Time Live" and "Oprah" have come calling. But she is wary of her 15 minutes of fame and said she thinks often of families she knows who have lost children to murderers.

"There's a whole part of me that says, 'No, let's not do this,'" Prejean said. "Let it all be and let these people heal."

To her relief, director Tim Robbins and actress Susan Sarandon, who plays Prejean, have been both "brave and fair" with her book and with the complex subject, Prejean said.

"Dead Man Walking" explores the psychological terror of the condemned man's wide-awake slide toward death. But it also confronts the agony he inflicted on his victims years before, their families' continuing torment, and Prejean's misplaced compassion in comforting the killers

while too long ignoring the families they destroyed.

She thinks the truth, if hard to dig out, is finally laid bare.

"It's a journey into the issue that will bring people to places in their hearts they hadn't been to before," she said. "The film brings them there emotionally and helps them see what's really involved in the state's killing a person."

Prejean hardly expected this role when she entered the order of St. Joseph of Medaille right out of high school in Baton Rouge.

The young Sister Louis Augustine wore a habit, taught English and religion to 7th- and 8th-grade girls, then ran a religious education program in Cabrini parish in New Orleans.

Her piety was conventional, personal, vertical. "Just me and God."

"I always knew that the way you loved God and the way you loved people were the same thing," she said. "I thought, 'I'll just be kind to everyone personally.' It had not yet occurred to me that if someone is unjustly treated by a system, being kind to them is not enough."

But a radical shift began to occur in the 1970s as her order started questioning whether it had lost touch with the poor. She began to read the Gospels in a new way and came to see Jesus Christ as a radical who meant his message of comfort to the poor to be taken literally.

She moved to the bleakness of St. Thomas with other nuns, running literacy programs and listening to the experiences of poor people.

It was there in 1982 that an acquaintance asked her to write to Elmo "Pat" Sonnier, a stranger on death row. Sonnier and his brother, Eddie, had been convicted of abducting a teenage couple on a lovers' lane in St. Martinville, in rural Louisiana, in 1977, raping the girl and killing both.

His brother, in what Prejean came to see as one of the almost random quirks that characterize the criminal justice system, got life in prison while Pat Sonnier faced the electric chair.

She accompanied Sonnier to his death, and it altered her life.

Two years later she accompanied another killer, Robert Lee Willie, who



with another man abducted, raped and murdered 18-year-old Faith Hathaway of Mandeville, a suburban community 30 miles north of New Orleans, leaving her to die. His accomplice, too, received a life sentence.

That put Sonnier and Willie in the electric chair, Prejean believes, were the same factors that drive the justice system's selection of a handful of prisoners for execution each year.

The death penalty is "99 percent rhetoric," she said. Of 24,000 homicides in the United States last year, only a few dozen killers, at most, will be executed. Overwhelmingly, their victims were white people, even though the face of the average murder victim increasingly is black.

Those few killers are literally doomed by inept lawyering because they could not afford better, she said.

Sonnier fought his verdict; but his fate was largely sealed at the trial, having seen his attorney for only two half-hour sessions, she said.

Yet those efforts for Sonnier betrayed Prejean in her early work. Her solicitude shocked and offended people who sympathized with Sonnier's and Willie's victims, making them wonder why Prejean seemed to be reading only half the gospel.

Prejean understands now she waited too long to approach Eula and Lloyd LeBlanc and Goldie and Godfrey Bourque, the parents of the teenagers Sonnier had helped kill.

A furious Lloyd LeBlanc confronted Prejean at a clemency board hearing where she pleaded for Sonnier's life. Why didn't you come to us? he asked.

She hadn't, she said, because she was afraid they would demand her support for Sonnier's death as evidence of her compassion for them.

But that was wrong, she admits now. "The church has to be on both sides of this issue."

The church should step up its opposition to the death penalty, throwing all its moral weight behind it, she said.

But churches also should be with crime victims more than they are now, Prejean said.

"The most shocking thing I found out is how people leave them alone," she said. Unsure what to say or how to console, friends back off.

"The church has to be there. Just like you'd organize for a fund drive, or the fair or the choir, the church has to organize these ministries at the parish level," Prejean said.

**DEAD MAN WALKING** In a scene from the new movie "Dead Man Walking," Sister Helen Prejean (played by Susan Sarandon) lays a hand of compassion on the shoulder of inmate Matthew Poncelet (played by Sean Penn). (Photo by Demmie Todd)

## Victims' families feel fresh wounds, yet some healing

NEW ORLEANS (RNS)—The death penalty debate yields a bitter side effect—the fresh agonies it inflicts on victims' families, who are trying to heal the most fearful emotional wounds.

Moral arguments over the basic dignity even of killers, doubts about judicial competence, and the years of public attention a killer receives while his victim lies forgotten—all seem perversely to elevate a murderer over a victim who was certainly innocent.

And so it is with the debut of the movie "Dead Man Walking."

"This puts us back to stage one. It hurts," Elizabeth Harvey said softly from her home in Mandeville, a New Orleans suburb.

She and her husband, Vernon, are the mother and stepfather of Faith Hathaway, an 18-year-old who was

abducted, raped and stabbed to death in 1980 by Robert Lee Willie and Joseph Vaccaro.

Faith Hathaway becomes Hope Percy in the movie; her parents, like the Harveys, are stung by Sister Helen Prejean's opposition to the death penalty for their daughter's killer.

Since Hathaway's death, the Harveys became the New Orleans area's most visible supporters of the death penalty. Every execution found them outside the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola supporting what was happening inside.

But over the years, Prejean kept in touch; a fragile relationship took hold, nourished on notes or calls.

Two years ago, Elizabeth Harvey got the state's permission to bury an unclaimed newborn girl found washed up from Lake Pontchartrain.

She buried her next to Faith. Prejean helped.

Harvey's daughter died alone, although in the movie, with its composite characters, Faith dies with a teenage boyfriend abducted from a lonely lovers' lane near rural St. Martinville, La., in 1977.

That scenario, too, was a real crime, and the girl's name was Loretta Bourque, the daughter of Goldie and Godfrey Bourque. By several accounts, they remain shattered by the experience and keep their privacy. They would not be interviewed.

"They're still angry. They say every time this comes up, it revives all the memories," Lloyd LeBlanc said. "To me, it's history now."

LeBlanc is the father of David LeBlanc, the boy Loretta was with that night when Pat Sonnier and his broth-

er, Eddie, raped Bourque and shot them both.

It was LeBlanc who first confronted Prejean at a clemency hearing in 1984 for ignoring their pain in comforting the imprisoned Pat Sonnier.

"I told her, 'If you've been honoring the right God, then who have I been honoring?'"

Yet Prejean and the LeBlancs have forged an extraordinary relationship since then. "Lloyd LeBlanc's the exception," Prejean said. "He shows us all how to live as a Christian."

Like the other parents, Lloyd LeBlanc, 66, remains a supporter of the death penalty.

But he has forgiven the Sonnier brothers. Shortly before their mother, Gladys, died, he sought her out, gave her a Christmas basket of fruit and told her he bore her no anger.

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